

FIRE STATION NO. 10



# THE RECRUITMENT & RETENTION ROADMAP



**YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND LEADERSHIP.**



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# A NOTE TO OUR DEPARTMENTS

The fire service in New York State has a proud and deeply rooted tradition of service, sacrifice, and community protection. For generations, volunteer fire departments have adapted to changing times while holding fast to the values that define who we are.

The realities surrounding recruitment and retention have changed. Fewer people are stepping forward to volunteer, community expectations have evolved, and the demands placed on today's firefighters are greater than ever before. Acknowledging these shifts does not diminish tradition – it protects it.

This kit is offered with respect for the long-standing traditions of the volunteer fire service and the many departments that continue to serve their communities with dedication and pride.

An important part of retaining volunteers is the environment they experience after they join. Fire departments are built on people – relationships, trust, and shared responsibility – and like any organization, the tone set by leadership influences how members feel about staying engaged over time. This is not meant as a critique of any individual or department, but as an encouragement to pause and reflect.

Driving people in the door is the initial challenge – fostering their satisfaction, happiness, and dedication is the secondary challenge in the recruitment and retention efforts. Successful, long-term retention comes from strong, well-balanced, modern leadership – after all, a fire department is, at its core, a business. And just like in any business setting, people are less likely to leave a “job” than they are to leave “management.” That statement is not a criticism or reflection of failure, rather it's intended to spark thoughtful consideration – while it may feel direct, it's critically important to address the realities in the real world in order to find true success.

Departments are encouraged to use this kit as a flexible resource, adopting what fits, setting aside what doesn't, and continuing the work of protecting their communities in ways that honor both experience and progress.



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION IS OUR LIFELINE

Fire departments across New York State have been facing a rapid decline in membership over the past few decades. In 20 years alone, the number of volunteers has decreased by 33%, dropping from roughly 120,000 volunteers to a mere 80,000.

The cause of this decline may differ depending on who you're talking to, but one thing is consistent – we need to increase the number of volunteer firefighters.

There's no doubt that recruiting new members is a challenge. It's difficult to ask someone to leave their loved ones to help a stranger, especially given the potential hazards and the lack of a paycheck that comes with the job.

For those who volunteer, there's no better feeling than helping those who need it the most, but taking the initial step into this world is scary for people with no prior exposure to the fire service. Encouraging our community members to step out of their comfort zone is a difficult task, but not impossible.

Retention is just as critical as recruitment, if not more so; the two are inseparable. Bringing in new members only to watch them leave months later is like pouring water into a leaky bucket. Recruitment brings people through the door; retention keeps them there.

Departments invest hours of training and mentorship in every recruit. When those recruits leave prematurely, the department loses not only their potential but also the investment of every member who trained them.

This isn't just a numbers game – it's an emotional one. Every resignation is a loss of skill, experience, and community trust. Every empty seat at drill night is a reminder of the fragility of our system. For families, the decline means longer response times, fewer trained responders, and a growing risk that help won't arrive when it's needed most.

This book is about solutions. It provides a roadmap for departments of all sizes – rural, suburban, and urban – by focusing on four pillars: recruitment, retention, leadership, and marketing. Each chapter will explore strategies that are working in firehouses across the state, while shining a light on the challenges we must overcome together.





# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## IDENTIFYING YOUR R&R PROBLEM

Understanding the barriers to recruitment and retention will help you better shape your campaigns. Most often, the biggest barriers are: time demands (try finding ways to reduce the impact factors and operational responsibilities of volunteers), reduce the popular perception of perceived danger (remind them they are given the tools and training for safety), and the perception of little recognition can be changed by showing how peer recognition increases pride and honor.

Highlighting benefits such as state income tax credits, health checkups, potentially lower-cost health insurance, service awards, and more speaks volumes to the gains of becoming a volunteer.

So, you think you've got a recruitment and retention problem? Step one = done.

You know you have a problem, so let's solve it. Maybe your department is losing members, and you're not gaining new firefighters fast enough to replace the ones you lost, or your recruitment game is so on point that you're struggling to keep up with all the new applications. This may seem like a good problem to have, but it's a problem, nonetheless.

Regardless of where you stand on the spectrum of the number of firefighters, the first step to designing your recruitment and retention plan is to conduct a climate check-in and a needs assessment.

The climate check-in is a great way to learn about your people. The department climate can make or break a fire department. Are people harassing each other, or is the brother/sisterhood better than ever? Is training effective, or are people not getting what they need out of drill nights?

While not everyone will be comfortable giving direct feedback, sending out anonymous surveys to your membership is a great way to get honest, constructive feedback.

Find out what your membership needs and wants, then figure out how to make it happen. A climate check-in and additional recruitment and retention tools can be found in the resources section of this book.

# THE POWER OF STORYTELLING

Walk into almost any firehouse on drill night and you'll find a familiar scene: firefighters sitting together, trading stories. Some stories are funny, others bizarre, and some capture the moments that shaped them into who they are today. Storytelling is more than just a pastime; it's part of the firehouse culture and one of the most overlooked tools for both recruitment and retention.

For recruitment, stories inspire. A prospective firefighter who hears a veteran recount a life-changing rescue may feel called to serve. Many firefighters can point to a single "legendary story" that sparked their decision to join.

For retention, stories strengthen bonds. They give members a way to process tough calls, celebrate wins, and connect across generations. Informal storytelling complements formal training by passing on lessons in a way textbooks never could. More importantly, storytelling builds resilience by reminding members that while some calls are heavy, they don't carry that weight alone.

Departments can nurture this tool by creating structured opportunities for storytelling: mentorship nights where veterans share experiences, and "rookie nights" where new members ask questions and hear stories or even recorded oral histories that preserve a department's legacy. These traditions keep members connected to the mission while welcoming new firefighters into a lineage of service.



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## KNOWLEDGE OF YOUR COMMUNITY IS POWER

There's a saying in the fire service: "You can't be what you can't see." If we want to recruit and retain members effectively, our departments must reflect the communities we serve. When people see themselves represented in their local firehouse, they're more likely to envision themselves as part of it.

This starts with understanding your community. If your residents primarily speak Spanish, your department should have members who can meet that language need. If your district includes a large college population, expect frequent turnover and create flexible schedules that accommodate students' busy lives.

In rural areas, recruitment might focus on neighbors helping neighbors. In larger cities, the emphasis may be on quick response times and a diverse range of skill sets.

Knowing your community also builds trust. A fire department that mirrors its community is more approachable, relatable, and trusted. When residents see firefighters who share their background, culture, or circumstances, they're more likely to believe the firehouse is a place where they belong.



## THE NEXT GENERATION

There comes a time in every firefighter's life when they must pass down the torch to the next generation of firefighters; but where are these new firefighters coming from? The frequency of multi-generation firefighters is decreasing and the number of younger members in the fire service isn't as high as it once was. Long gone are the days of passively recruiting new, young members; instead, we need to lead intentional recruitment efforts that target a younger audience.

Many departments already have their Junior member recruitment efforts like career day and fire prevention day at their local schools. With those events typically happening at high schools and elementary schools, respectively, we are missing a key demographic of future firefighters: middle school. Middle school years are formative in a child's development. Between 11 and 14,

children are figuring out their place in the world and how they see themselves contributing to it. If we want to gain interest from the younger generation, we need to keep the momentum going from elementary school through middle school and all the way until they can join their local department.

One of our favorite ways of keeping this group engaged is through after-school activities. Remember – kids these days have a lot going on. Between academics, sports, and extracurricular activities, they have a lot to choose from. We need to sell the fire service to them and convince them that it's worth their time. To stay engaged with this age group, departments have seen great success in summer camps and after-school programs. Through these fire department sponsored events, kids can be exposed to the hands-on firefighting skills that we teach in firefighter one, just modified to be age appropriate.

Ultimately, if we want to recruit the next generation of firefighters, we need to talk to them; we need to find out what they want to get out of the fire service and figure out how we can meet those needs.

## THINKING OF SIMILAR COMMUNITIES: RECRUITMENT OF MILITARY VETS

It's no secret that military vets hold similar values to emergency response volunteers. Both groups tend to have a strong connection to their communities and a passion for significant moral causes. This alone makes the fire service an excellent fit for vets looking to bring a sense of service and community back into their lives.

As a plus, veterans and former military members are trained for structure and goal accomplishment, making them not only great social fits but also invaluable assets for firehouse operations.

When creating flyers or planning outreach for your R&R, consider posting informational flyers in common community organizations that allow them, such as the YMCA, local grocery stores, or even local parks.



# LEADERSHIP & INTERNAL CULTURE

## THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the cornerstone of retention. Members look to leaders for guidance, support, and vision. The culture of the department, for better or worse, is often a direct reflection of the leadership at the top and the informal leaders throughout the ranks.

Strong leaders create trust, communicate clearly, and model respect. Poor leaders, on the other hand, can undo the best recruitment campaigns and push members out the door.

Strong leadership not only ensures the safety and effectiveness of operations but also plays a decisive role in whether members choose to join and, more importantly, whether they choose to stay.

People may be drawn in by the excitement of serving their community, but they remain because of the relationships they build and the way they're treated. In this way, recruitment, retention, and leadership are inseparable.

Just as there are many reasons people join, there are a lot of reasons they leave. A lack of recognition, poor communication, toxic culture, or a perception that leadership does not value their time can quickly drive members away. For volunteers, competing priorities such as family, work, and school make it easy to walk away from an environment that feels negative or unrewarding.

Leaders set the tone for how recruits are welcomed, how members are valued, and how conflicts are resolved.

## KEEP THE FIRE BURNING FROM DAY ONE

The experience of joining a department – how they're welcomed, onboarded, and supported – directly influences how long they stay.

Too often, members are lost because of poor communication, messy onboarding, or a lack of follow-through. Clear expectations and consistent guidance can make the difference between a long career and a quick exit.

The importance of first impressions can't be overstated. Systematically, our brains tend to set unique expectations on things we get ourselves involved in. Once these expectations have been created, they become difficult to overturn or rewrite and can have a significant effect on our attitude as we advance.

In return, this will alter the way we perceive the situation we are involved in and ultimately dictate whether we remain motivated or disengaged.

It is crucial that we provide as many tools as possible to create a welcoming environment for anyone taking that leap of faith.

## WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

When we welcome a new member to our team, there are two things we want to accomplish before they arrive for their first day.



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1. **WE** are welcoming.

2. **WE** have structure.

Now that's easy to say, but what does this mean?

Let's start with what constitutes a welcoming environment. Your team must be capable of making anyone interested in volunteering feel accepted, regardless of their:

■ **GENDER**

■ **CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

■ **EDUCATION**

■ **AGE**

■ **SOCIAL STATUS**

These topics are critical to younger generations that are more socially progressive. It's no secret that the fire service is struggling to recruit younger applicants, while simultaneously having members age out of service.

With that in mind, any team members you decide to onboard need to be treated fairly and assigned tasks and roles based on their capabilities, not on any predetermined assumption of their skills based on the list above.

It's also important to encourage a mentor-like mindset in your senior members. This way, they're able and willing to train and assist in making new members feel seen and valued.

This can be done by simply laying out goals and cognitive ideas for your senior members, such as Realistic Self-Confidence, Self-Control, and Relationship Management.

It's advisable to have these discussions with your team before onboarding new recruits and assigning a mentor, so they don't feel alone or unwelcome when they arrive.

To be clear, these systems should be at least outlined before new members are onboarded with your organization.



## THE POWER OF MENTORSHIP

A surefire way to tank a department's retention rates is to throw a new member into the ring without back up. Let's remind ourselves what it's like to be the new guy; even something as simple as parking at the firehouse can be intimidating, let alone responding to calls. This is why having a mentorship program is vital to the success of your department.

The first step of creating a mentorship program is to establish goals, objectives, and expectations. What do you want your members, both mentors and mentees, to get out of the program? Are you looking to improve operational skills, build leadership skills, improve fire department culture, or a combination of all three? It's important to have a program mission statement in place to manage mentors' accountability and mentee expectations.

The members that you select to be your department's mentors are as important as who your department selects to be the chief. While they are not in charge operationally, the influence they have on new members could make or break your department. Just as a phenomenal firefighter doesn't necessarily make a phenomenal chief, an excellent operational firefighter might not make an excellent mentor. Mentors need to be carefully selected. Some criteria that you may want to consider include:

- Does the mentor receive feedback well?
- Does the mentor give feedback well?
- Is the mentor fully up to date on all fire department by-laws and procedures?
- Is the mentor able to identify and help a mentee with burnout, fatigue, or other mental health issues?
- Is the mentor able to perform as an advocate for their mentee?
- Does the mentor have the time to dedicate to new members?
- Is the mentor stretched too thin or close to burnout?

Once a team of mentors is selected, it is important to create a structured plan for the mentors to follow. Essentially, you want to establish a mentorship curriculum, so each mentee receives the same support. Along with this curriculum, it is important to set up feedback and evaluation tools. It is important for mentors to provide structured feedback to their mentees, and it is important for leadership to provide feedback to their mentors.

Additional support for building a department mentorship program can be found in the resources section of this book.

## RECOGNITION FUELS MOTIVATION

The fire service is often a thankless job, but that doesn't mean appreciation should be absent inside the firehouse. Firefighters give up holidays, milestones, and sleep to serve strangers. Constant service without recognition will lead to resignations.

Recognition from leadership – whether through formal awards, a simple thank-you, or peer acknowledgment – fuels motivation and loyalty. The best recognition programs start with asking members directly what matters to them.

Public recognition is an excellent tool for accomplishments that benefit the whole team or organization, such as milestones in a team project or assisting in your organization’s R&R goals.

Psychology suggests that the relationships we have with others can help us understand our level of happiness. Therefore, letting your team members shine in front of their peers will lead to more respect and internal kudos from one another, creating better quality relationships.

Private recognition is more suitable for improvements on tasks or projects that were more personal, such as attitude or personal challenges. These are also more suitable for accomplishments that may shed light on issues the rest of the team does not need to be aware of. Some team members may struggle in some areas that seem elementary to others.

As a leader, taking mental notes of your team’s strengths and weaknesses is key. You also need to be mindful of what is appropriate to share. Depending on the context, some accomplishments may not be suitable to share in a group setting.

## SENSE OF BELONGING

The ideal firehouse feels like a second family. Culture can either anchor members or drive them away. Toxic environments, cliques, or lack of inclusion are fast tracks to membership loss. Creating a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood ensures members feel valued and supported, even during the most difficult calls.

## NAVIGATING CHANGE

Change is hard in the fire service. Traditions run deep, and fear of losing identity often fuels resistance. Leaders must approach change by involving members in the process, honoring tradition while explaining the “why” behind decisions. When rolled out thoughtfully, change can strengthen rather than divide.



# DOUSING BURNOUT AND COMPASSION FATIGUE

Firefighting demands time, energy, and emotional resilience. Burnout and compassion fatigue can erode performance and morale. Leaders must normalize conversations about stress, encourage balance, and support peer or professional resources. Celebrating personal as well as service milestones reminds members they're valued as people, not just responders.

In the fire service, people are typically looking to give back to their communities and get involved in things bigger than themselves. Everything we've discussed will be cultivated into members feeling valued and part of a team.

Think objectively about your members and what their goals are. Have one-on-one meetings with your team members and take notes. When you're making plans for your organization's goals, include your team, as it will show them you're genuinely invested in their growth.

Naturally, this promotes a healthy give/take relationship, showing proof that their efforts are met with real understanding and action. As a note, make sure you're honest and realistic. Do not overpromise. This is a leadership fault that leads to unrealistic expectations and lower morale.

Golden Rule: Always keep it real. People admire and follow honesty, not smoke and mirrors.



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## LEADERS AREN'T BORN - THEY'RE MADE

Leadership shouldn't be reserved for officers. Mentorship, empowerment, and succession planning ensure future leaders are ready to step up. Informal leaders can take ownership of projects, and new members paired with veterans build confidence and continuity. Leadership, at every level, is the glue that holds retention together.

Leadership should not be reserved only for those with formal titles. Departments thrive when leadership potential is recognized and nurtured across all levels.

Mentorship bridges the gap between recruits and veterans. Pairing new members with experienced firefighters helps them integrate more smoothly and builds confidence.

Empowering informal leaders gives your members ownership of projects like equipment checks or community outreach, fostering pride and responsibility while easing the burden on officers.

Succession planning ensures future leaders are ready when the time comes. Departments that identify potential leaders early, provide training opportunities, and gradually give them responsibility build a strong leadership pipeline.

This avoids scrambling when turnover occurs and prevents stagnation from “We’ve always done it this way.” Rather than seeing it as losing our jobs, we should see it as an honor to pass the torch to the next generation of leaders.



## TURNING INQUIRIES INTO VOLUNTEERS

Receiving an inquiry from a prospective volunteer is the equivalent of a salesman receiving a hot business “lead.” It is an expression of sincere interest on the part of the individual, generally requiring a timely, systematic and thorough response to “close the deal.”

Good salespeople follow several simple principles. They:

- Follow up quickly when an inquiry is received.
- Provide the prospect with enough information to make an informed decision.
- Display enthusiasm for their product or service and make the prospect feel comfortable.

## ESTABLISHING A PROCESS FOR FOLLOW-UP

To ensure that volunteer candidate inquiries do not slip through the cracks, it is strongly recommended that the Recruitment Coordinator or Assistant Recruitment Coordinator be given exclusive responsibility for all follow-up activities. In addition to providing for a timely response, this will help your fire department convey a coordinated and consistent message. All inquiries should be forwarded to your department’s Recruitment Coordinator.

If a new candidate stops by your facility to inquire about volunteering, and the Recruitment Coordinator is not available, the individual’s name, phone number, and email address should be obtained for follow-up.

As soon as an inquiry is received, the candidate should be sent an acknowledgement letter along with pertinent information such as a department brochure, application, FAQ sheet, etc.

A follow-up letter might read as follows:

### ***DEAR MR./MS. JONES:***

Thank you very much for your interest in joining the XYZ Volunteer Fire Department team. Volunteers like yourself are the driving force behind the successful operation of our department, and we greatly appreciate your interest.

I am eager to meet with you to answer any questions you have, and to provide an overview of our department and how you can help. Your family is also invited to be part of this visit.

I will give you a call shortly to set up a meeting. In the meantime, I thought you might find the enclosed brochure helpful.

Again, thank you for your interest in joining our team. I look forward to working with you and helping you realize the rewards of serving our neighbors.

Best Regards,  
John Smith  
*Recruitment Coordinator*

## THE VOLUNTEER INFORMATION MEETING

After sending your initial response letter, call the prospective volunteer quickly to introduce yourself and set up an informational meeting. The meeting can take any number of forms, depending on your fire department's preferences and the needs of each situation. This is where the information originally collected becomes important because it allows for follow-up down the line if the candidate does not immediately volunteer.

It is recommended that fire departments meet with recruits and their families to explain time commitments, rewards and other aspects of volunteering. This ensures that everyone is on the same page with requirements and expectations.

Some fire departments have regularly scheduled volunteer information sessions at their facility. One advantage of this approach is that the recruit might feel less pressure than in a one-to-one session. There is also an opportunity to meet others with a similar amount of experience or exposure to the fire service.

Use your judgment to determine what type of meeting makes the most sense and be sensitive to your audience. If children are involved in a family meeting, for example, be sure to avoid any graphic descriptions of calls you may have been on.

Whatever approach you take, be sure to provide a broad perspective on the fire department and its needs. And give candidates ample opportunity to comment and ask questions. Some topics for your information meeting agenda include:

- Fire department history
- Current volunteer needs, emergency as well as support services
- The true nature of volunteer experience based on firsthand knowledge
- Training requirements
- Time requirements
- Fire department benefits (tax breaks, pension, insurance, etc.)
- Any reimbursable costs (e.g. uniforms, etc.).
- The intangible rewards of the job
- The fire department's review process for volunteer candidates
- Next steps

At the end of the meeting, be sure to provide candidates with your department's application. Ask them if they would like to complete and submit it at that time. If not, give the candidate a call one week after the meeting and ask if they have decided to submit their application. If they are still undecided, tell them that they can call anytime with additional questions and that you will put them on your mail and email lists to keep them current with fire department events. With this approach, you will keep the possibility of volunteering open for the future even if they don't join immediately.

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## THE FAMILY BEHIND THE FIREFIGHTER

When someone joins their local fire department, they expect certain sacrifices - missed dinners, sleepless nights, and holidays spent at the station. But what about the loved ones they leave behind when the tones drop? The quiet sacrifices made by the families of firefighters often go unnoticed and unacknowledged.

While firefighters understand the demands of the job, it's not always clear whether their families fully grasp the extent of those commitments. And that disconnect can impact not just family harmony but firefighter retention.

Including families from the very beginning is one of the most powerful tools a department has to build loyalty and satisfaction. Departments should adopt a family-first mentality right from orientation. Invite spouses to ask questions about time commitments and expectations. Let children tour the firehouse, climb aboard the trucks, and see where their parent volunteers. When families feel informed and involved, they're more likely to support their firefighter - and in turn, their firefighter is more likely to stay.

To improve retention, departments should create regular opportunities to bring families into the fold. Host open houses, family picnics, or holiday gatherings. These events offer more than just fun; they help build community among the families themselves. When loved ones have a support network of others who understand the unique challenges of loving a firefighter, it makes the tough times a little easier to bear.

Departments should take a hard look at their current policies and ask: Are we doing enough to support the people behind the scenes? By making family inclusion a priority, fire departments not only improve firefighter retention, but they also build stronger, more connected teams.

Integrating families into the fire service isn't just a nice gesture - it's a smart, strategic move. Departments that recognize the critical role families play foster a culture of support, resilience, and commitment. When both firefighters and their loved ones feel seen, valued, and prepared for the realities of service, everyone benefits.



# MARKETING

## CRAFTING YOUR FIREHOUSE STORY

In the fire service, one common thread connects every individual: the call to protect and serve their community. But when it comes to recruiting new volunteers, finding people who share that calling is just the starting point. Your department's story, culture, and values are what turn interest into action.

To start marketing your department, you must think about what your department's "brand" is, or what makes you different. Branding is all about focusing on what makes your department unique.

Let's start with exercise: Ask yourself what sets your department apart and makes it a place others would want to volunteer. It may be helpful to ask your fellow members as well, and see if there is a similar theme among the firehouse.

Maybe it's your history, your training culture, or even the personalities that make up your crew that set you apart. When you define your firehouse's unique identity, you can start to create messaging that's authentic and stands out.

Now that you've taken a closer look at what makes your department unique, take this information and start to think about your "Why Volunteer" message. This should be clear, concise, and a message that can truly become the core of your recruitment marketing.

**HERE'S A LITTLE BRANDING 101.** To create effective marketing, brand consistency is essential. A consistent brand builds trust, recognition, and credibility, which is crucial when recruiting new members in your community. The goal of branding is that when someone sees your flyer in the grocery store, your social media post, or your booth at a community event, they should be able to immediately recognize you.

You can dive even deeper into your firehouse's brand and pick specific colors and fonts to use in your marketing materials to keep brand consistency. And, don't forget that your department's logo or emblem is the most important part of your brand.

A strong “why volunteer” message, paired with visuals that pop (action shots, candid firehouse moments, and bold graphics), short “punchy” writing, and clear calls to action (such as “Join Today” or “Be the Difference”) will make your department’s marketing efforts stand out among the rest.

## **MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING: DON'T PUT ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET.**

When it comes to recruiting volunteer firefighters, one flyer or one Facebook post isn't typically going to cut it. People get information in different ways – some online, some in person, and some by word of mouth – and some need all three before they act on a message.

Multi-channel marketing simply means using more than one way or “channel” to reach potential recruits. The goal is to meet people where they already spend their time, instead of hoping they come across a single message.

## **WHAT “CHANNELS” MEAN.**

A channel is just a path to communicate your message. For fire departments, channels might include:

- >> ONLINE:** Your department’s website, social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), community email lists
- >> IN-PERSON:** School visits, open houses, community events, parades, farmers markets
- >> PRINTED MATERIALS:** Posters in local businesses, banners on fire trucks, flyers mailed to homes
- >> WORD OF MOUTH:** Current members talking to friends, family, coworkers, and neighbors

## **DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS.**

- Different people have different habits. Some recruits will see your post online, others will notice the banner at the local high school football game. By spreading your message across multiple channels, you increase your chances of connecting with the right people.
- Repetition builds trust. If someone sees your recruitment ad online, then again on a poster at the library, and then hears about it from a friend, the message becomes more credible.
- Channels keep your department top of mind. Even if someone isn't ready to join today, seeing your department active in the community means they'll think of you when the time is right.

## **THINK BIG. START SMALL.**

You don't need to use every channel all at once. Start with two or three that make sense for your community. For example:

- Post about your recruitment needs on Facebook.
- Hand out flyers at the local car show.
- Ask current members to personally invite one person each.

The combination matters more than the size of the campaign. Consistency across multiple channels helps your department stand out and shows you're serious about welcoming new members.



## QUICK ACTION CHECKLIST.

To get started, pick 2-3 channels you can realistically manage, such as Facebook, posters at local businesses, and word of mouth.

- Create one clear message (Example: ““We need volunteer firefighters – join us!”) and use the same wording across every channel. Be aware that overusing the word “volunteer” can make people think “oh great, work for free,” – so try phrases such as “Get Involved!” or “Be a part of your community.”
- Post/share/display in multiple places – don’t rely on just one flyer or one social post. Aim for repetition. Think of yourself as a consumer – brands, messaging, and ideas often ‘stick’ when you hear them often enough. This is why the tune to “Old Macdonald Had a Farm” can easily be on the tip of your tongue rather than the geometry you learned in high school. Our brains are wired for repetition.
- Ask every member to spread the word by personally inviting at least one person they know.
- Track what works – Did people show up because of a flyer, a Facebook post, or a friend’s invite? Use that info to focus your efforts next time. Think, “If I can’t measure it, should I even bother?”

## HEAT UP YOUR RECRUITMENT

Not every place you hang a flyer or talk to people will bring in new volunteers. Some areas of your community are much more likely to generate interest than others. These are your “hot zones” – the places where potential recruits are already gathered, already engaged, and most open to your message. Identifying these zones will save you time, energy, and resources.



### WHAT MAKES A HOT ZONE?

A recruitment hot zone is any location, event, or channel where:

- >> **COMMUNITY-MINDED PEOPLE GATHER:** farmers’ markets, town festivals, parades, school events
- >> **YOUNGER ADULTS ARE ACTIVE:** high schools, trade schools, colleges, gyms, sports leagues
- >> **CIVIC-MINDED FOLKS SPEND TIME:** libraries, town halls, veteran halls, community centers, faith-based events
- >> **ONLINE ENGAGEMENT IS STRONG:** local Facebook groups, town Instagram hashtags, Nextdoor threads

In short: places where people who value service and connection are already present.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR HOT ZONES.

Look at your current roster – where did your last five recruits come from? Was it word of mouth? A school program? A Facebook post? Patterns here point to hot zones.

- 1. ASK YOUR FIREFIGHTERS** Where do they work, socialize, or volunteer outside the firehouse? These are often untapped spots for outreach.
- 2. MAP COMMUNITY HUBS** Pull out a town map and mark key gathering points. Overlay local event calendars and school activity schedules. The overlaps are prime recruiting areas.
- 3. CHECK DEMOGRAPHICS** If you're aiming to bring in younger volunteers, focus on schools, trade programs, and gyms. If you want mid-career people, workplaces and civic organizations may be better zones.

## QUICK ACTION CHECKLIST.

- Review where your most recent members came from.
- Make a list of 5-10 community gathering spots.
- Assign members of your department to attend those places/events.
- Track which areas produce leads, then double down on the most effective ones.

## WHY IT MATTERS.

If you treat recruitment like a “spray and pray” exercise – posting the same flyer everywhere – you’ll burn energy and see little return. Focusing on hot zones makes recruitment targeted, efficient, and personal.



## BUILD A WEBSITE THAT IGNITES ENGAGEMENT

Your website is more than just a digital flyer – it’s your firehouse door online and the very foundation of any business or public entity online. When people are curious about volunteering, this is where they go for the most information and validation, and are most likely to convert from visitor to recruit.

If your site looks outdated, confusing, or lifeless, they’ll click away and most likely not return. But if it’s clear, engaging, mobile-friendly, and easy to act on, it becomes your most powerful recruitment tool.

Your website should pull its weight just like your crew does on a call. That means:

- Always ready to answer questions people want answered
- Clear, meaningful benefits
- Clear paths to join
- Easy to navigate, no matter the device – phone, tablet, laptop, desktop
- Built to capture interest and turn it into action

## MUST-HAVES FOR YOUR DEPARTMENT WEBSITE:

- >> **CLEAR CALL TO ACTION:** A bold “Volunteer Now” or “Join Our Team” button should appear on every page – as much as possible above the fold, the imaginary line where scrolling then has to take place.
- >> **SIMPLE NAVIGATION:** Visitors should quickly find info like “How to Volunteer,” “Training & Benefits,” “Contact Us,” and “Get Started.”
- >> **REAL/MEANINGFUL CONTENT:** Use photos and videos of your firefighters – not stock images where possible. Authenticity matters. Authenticity “sells.”
- >> **UPDATED INFORMATION:** Keep events, contact details, and leadership info current. Outdated pages can signal an inactive department. It also gives the feeling of a lack of attention to detail’ and that turns all consumers and recruits off.



## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE YOUR HOMEPAGE.

Think of your homepage like the firetrucks in the bay – everything essential should be right up front.

- >> **USE A BIG, BOLD HEADLINE:** For example, “Volunteer Firefighters Needed in Our Community: Be A Part of Something Great.” Try to vary the phrases with ‘volunteer’ in them – appeal to what makes people tick: “Get Involved,” “Be a Community Helper,” “Be a Part of Something Important.”
- >> **JOIN BUTTON:** No scrolling required. But if scrolling does have to happen, it’s okay to repeat the button below the imaginary line of scroll. Remember, make it easy for people.
- >> **QUICK OVERVIEWS:** Such as a short paragraph on why volunteering matters. Use bullet points – people scan and they act when benefits meet their needs.
- >> **VISUALS:** Strong photos or a short video of your team in action can make or break your efforts.
- >> **EASY CONTACT OR SIGN-UP FORM:** Don’t make people hunt for it and don’t have so many fields that you encourage form abandonment. The idea is to get critical contact info so your team can reach out.

## EASY DOES IT.

People lose interest if it takes more than a few clicks. The typical rule is no more than three clicks to get to the point of conversion. Your site should:

- Offer a short interest form (Name, Email, Phone) – don’t overwhelm them.
- Provide links to FAQs about training, time commitment, and safety.
- Send an automatic confirmation email so they know you got their info.

## RESPOND, RESPOND, RESPOND.

A website that captures leads is useless if nobody follows up. And time is of the essence. People want to feel like you hear them, so respond quickly. Every inquiry should get a quick reply – ideally within 24 hours.

The faster you respond, the more likely they’ll stay engaged. Don’t give them the opportunity to forget. Assign someone to check messages daily, even if the reply is just, “Thanks, we’ll be in touch soon.” And mean it – soon means you’ll definitely respond quickly.

## SELL WITH THEIR CELL.

More than half of your visitors will be on their phone. That’s not only true for most web traffic – it’s especially true for younger audiences.

Meet them and engage with them where they are. If your site doesn’t work well on mobile devices, you’re losing recruits. Buttons should be tap-friendly, forms easy to fill out, and pages quick to load.

Test it yourself. If you can’t sign up easily from your phone, neither can they. Have a few other firefighters at the station try it too. Listen to the feedback.



Photo by Sidewinder Photography

## QUICK ACTION CHECKLIST.

- Add a “Volunteer Now” button on every page.
- Test your site on your phone – can you sign up in under a minute?
- Replace stock photos with real ones from your department.
- Set up a short interest form (3–4 fields max).
- Make sure someone responds within 24 hours of every inquiry.
- Update your homepage regularly so it never looks “stale.”
- Use town/county names in your content so Google can find you.

## JUST HAVING A WEBSITE ISN’T ENOUGH.

Having a website is like having a firehouse: it’s the headquarters, the place people can go if they’re looking for you. But just as a firehouse doesn’t put out fires by itself, a website won’t recruit new members on its own. You might snag a few, but more often than not, your audience needs some nudging elsewhere, too.

Plus, people must already know you exist and choose to visit your site. Some people who think of volunteering on their own will show up, but waiting for your entire community to think that way is short-sighted.

In today's world people bounce between channels constantly. They may see a Facebook post while scrolling at night, then check your website the next day for details, then forward your flyer as a PDF to a friend. Each channel reinforces the other, building familiarity and trust.

So while a website is necessary, it's usually not enough. Think of your website as the hub or foundation, and digital channels like social media, email, and online ads as the spokes that pull people in. The more spokes, the stronger the wheel – and the better your recruitment will roll forward.

## SEO WITHOUT SMOKE: SIMPLE WAYS TO BE FOUND ON GOOGLE

SEO – Search Engine Optimization – is a set of tactics and techniques so you can be found quickly and easily in searches on sites including Google, Yahoo, and Bing. With more than a trillion searches in Google per year alone, no doubt search engines are where you want to be found right away.

Statistics tell us the vast majority of search clicks in search engine results come from the first 10 results the search engines provide after a query. Being found in those first 10 is important, but being higher up in those ranks of 10 results is even better. SEO may sound technical, but it's simply about being easy to find. Start with these basics:



- Use your town or county name on your site – for example, “Volunteer Firefighter in Albany, NY.”
- Add a Google Business Profile for your fire department. A quick Google search will turn up instructions for this.
- Post updates regularly on a blog and link to them on your social media. Google tends to favor active websites that are actively providing value to visitors.
- Keep page titles simple and clear, like “Join Albany, NY Volunteer Fire Department.” To be technical, keep it within 65-70 characters.

### THE KEY TO GETTING FOUND.

People search with keywords and key phrases. You don't need marketing jargon – just think about what real people would type into Google. Google is known as a semantic/context engine so you don't have to guess exactly what people will search with and then expect to only be found by that phrase. Examples:

“Volunteer firefighter near me”

“How to become a firefighter in [your town/county]”

“Fire department volunteers [location]”

“Join [Your Department Name] Fire Department”

# FAN THE FLAMES OF INTEREST WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become one of the most powerful marketing tools available today. It is free to use and connects you with millions of users across all generations. While joining may be easy, managing it effectively takes a lot more work than people initially realize.

We know your time is limited as a volunteer firefighter, and social media isn't always at the top of your list. Focusing on quality over quantity when it comes to your social media strategy is key.

When developing a social media strategy, start by deciding which platforms make the most sense for your department. We recommend focusing on Facebook and Instagram as they work well for reaching local audiences, integrate together smoothly since they are both owned by Meta, and are relatively easy to manage.

If your department produces a lot of video content, YouTube is a great addition for showcasing longer clips and training highlights as well. Instead of trying to be on every platform, focus on a few key platforms and spend more time creating high-quality content.

Check out the resources section for some social media posts to help you get ahead!



## CREATING FIRE CONTENT

Creating content that sparks attention and creates engagement with likes, shares, and follows is the most important part of your social media strategy. Think back to what you identified as your firehouse's unique factors. What kind of content can you create from your uniqueness that will stop someone when scrolling social media?

Maybe you create a video of your department's latest training or post a video that shows off your department's personalities. Every event you attend, every training - almost anything and everything can be content.

Celebrate members' birthdays, special life events, and success stories - people love to see this more human side on social media. The more your audience gets to know your team, the more likely they can envision themselves as part of your crew.

While this sounds easy, staying consistent with content on social media can be a lot of work, especially when you're trying to balance volunteering, working, family, etc. Try using a scheduling tool such as

Meta Business Suite or Hootsuite, where you can plan out your posts. With scheduling, you can keep up the consistency without burning yourself out.

Social media requires a little extra work beyond just posting content and logging off. Engaging with users who comment on your content, answering direct messages, and liking other users' content are all ways you encourage these platforms' algorithms to spread the reach of your content.

Reminder! Everything you post online never really goes away. Too many times, departments are getting themselves in trouble because they share something publicly when it should have stayed private. Likes, shares, and comments are visible to others – so stay mindful of the content you engage with.

It is always better to stay safe than sorry when it comes to social media! Think twice before liking or sharing anything that could be viewed as controversial, and always double-check that you are sharing things privately, not publicly. Best practice is to keep your personal and department's pages as separate as possible.

## **TOOLS YOU CAN USE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA:**

- Canva – Free plan and easy to use for marketing materials. They have templates so you don't have to start from scratch, and even a brand kit to help keep consistency.
- Pexels and Unsplash – Two websites that offer free high-quality images you can use in marketing materials.
- Google Fonts – Access hundreds of free fonts you can download and use to really stand out!



## **EMAIL BLASTS THAT BUST THROUGH THE CLUTTER**

Email can be your department's megaphone, but if you shout too often or too long, people tune you out.

Think of emails like firehouse calls: quick, clear, and with purpose.

Use short paragraphs, bullet points, and bolded headers so readers can skim. The latest statistic is people only consume about 30% of text content, so make it meaningful. Break up bigger chunks of content with meaningful images.

Place focus on what the recruit gets or how they benefit by becoming a volunteer. Think of it as a problem/solution. Understand what's missing and what matters to the recruit and be the solution for that missing piece of their puzzle.

Always include a clear next step: "Click to sign up," "Join us at the open house," "Reply if you're interested." And end with a clear, powerful call-to-action.

## WRITING SUBJECT LINES THAT GET OPENED.

- Keep it to 5-7 words, if possible. Short, but meaningful. This is a first impression.
- Create curiosity (“Ready to answer the call?”), urgency (“Volunteers needed this weekend”), or value (“Learn firefighting skills for free”).
- Avoid spammy words like “FREE!!!” or in all caps – they can land you in the junk folder, never to be seen.

## FREE/LOW-COST TOOLS YOU CAN USE FOR EMAIL MARKETING.

- Mailchimp – Easy to use, free under 500 subscribers, but these offers change all the time so do your own research
- Constant Contact – More robust features if you’re ready to grow
- Gmail groups – Basic but effective if your list is small and you’re just starting

## QUICK ACTION CHECKLIST.

- Keep emails short, clear, and action-oriented.
- Write subject lines that create curiosity or urgency.
- Use free tools before investing in bigger platforms.



## MAKING YOUR MESSAGE PERSONAL THROUGH TEXTING

Texting is like tapping someone on the shoulder – personal, direct, and hard to ignore. Texting has quickly become one of the most effective marketing tools of today. Texts get read and responded to more than ever.

Emails can sit unopened, but texts almost always get read, usually within three minutes.

Texts feel more personal, which makes people more likely to respond.

A simple invite – “Hey, we’re holding an info night Tuesday at 7. Can you make it?” – carries more weight than any flyer. But it’s important to have a multi-channel approach.

A text can bring the thought of a flyer seen earlier to top of mind. Or vice-versa. Keep in mind: repetition and frequency work the best on the brain. That’s why television commercials are sold with terminology such as ‘recency’ and ‘frequency.’

## SAMPLE SCRIPTS FOR OUTREACH CONVERSATIONS

(modify these for your own voice)

**INTRO TEXT:** “Hi [Name], this is [Your Name] from [Department]. We’re looking for new volunteers and thought you might be interested. Can I send you details?” (Asking permission shows respect and builds trust.)

**EVENT REMINDER:** “Just a reminder – our Volunteer Open House is tonight at 7 at the firehouse. Hope to see you there!” (People are busy, they need reminders).

**ONE-TO-ONE ASK:** “You’ve got the heart for it. Want to come by the firehouse and see what it’s like to be part of the team?” (Appeal to an innate need to be a part of something bigger than themselves.)



## NEWS THAT REPORTERS CAN USE

A press release isn’t just an announcement – it’s a story starter. It helps reporters with finding and constructing stories/content for their media outlets. Reporters are busy and sift through dozens of emails every day, so the easier you make it for them to see the value of your story, the better chance you have of getting coverage. A good press release will help do this.

For a fire department, this means highlighting the people behind the work, not just the facts. Instead of saying, “Department X is holding a recruitment open house,” try:

“Department X is opening its doors this weekend to give the community a chance to step into a firefighter’s boots and learn what it takes to protect their neighbors.”

Give reporters a clear angle: why now, why here, and why it matters to their readers. Keep it short, factual, and written in plain language that they can copy and paste if needed. Include a strong headline, a quote from a chief or volunteer that adds a human voice, and the who/what/when/where details up front.

Think of it this way: your press release should be a ready-made article. If a reporter is short on time, they could run it almost as is.

## IT’S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.

Press releases work best when they’re backed by real relationships. Don’t just send something to the general newsroom email and hope for the best. Identify the reporters who cover local news, human interest, or community events, and reach out directly. Do this by visiting the news website, social media, and even LinkedIn pages.

Introduce yourself, let them know you're a resource, and invite them to stop by the station even when you don't have a big announcement. If you connect with them on social media, engage with their content – likes, shares, and comments – to keep your name, position, and department top of mind.

Share background information, offer interviews, answer questions, or give them behind-the-scenes access to training drills. Over time, they'll start to see your department as a go-to source for positive community stories.

Relationships also mean responsiveness. If a reporter emails or calls, get back to them quickly, even if it's just to say you'll follow up with more info later. Just like above with recruits, be timely with your responses. That reliability builds trust, and when it's time to promote your next recruitment event, you'll already have allies in the newsroom who are more likely to give your story attention.

## HOW TO SELECT A SPOKESPERSON FOR THE MEDIA.

Whoever you choose to talk to the media about firehouse news needs to reflect what your firehouse stands for, and they need to be able to communicate that effectively. Below are the top three prerequisites your spokesperson needs to have before they appear on camera.

**1. KNOW THE FACTS AND KNOW THEM WELL.** Any information shared with your community by your organization must be accurate and evidence-based. Do NOT spread information through your community that's merely an opinion. If there's no reputable evidence of an event or conclusion, don't put it on camera or in writing.

**2. SPEAK PROFESSIONALLY AND CONFIDENTLY.** People respond to well-spoken and well-presented people. Those who represent your organizations in this context need to be well-spoken and professional. Profanity, nicknames, jokes, or biased opinions will lead to distrust from your community.

Since we only talk about facts in front of the media, we can speak with a sense of leadership and confidence. If your spokesperson is quiet and can't handle public speaking, you may need to reconsider your selection.

**3. BE RESPONSIVE.** Any inquiries from the media or community need to be addressed promptly to ensure only up-to-date and accurate information is circulating. Even if you don't have the facts yet, make sure they know that, and aren't led to create speculation or spread false information.



## THE POWER OF PRINT

As the world has become increasingly digital, traditional print marketing has started to become overlooked, but it still holds real value. Print marketing is the flyers handed out at events, posters displayed around your community, or the mailers sent to neighbors of your firehouse. These materials still drive strong results if designed thoughtfully and strategically.

Think about how much marketing mail you receive, or how many flyers you collect after attending an event. Finding ways you can stand out and be memorable in that stack of mail or flyers is key.

Three ways to make your print materials stand out:



- 1. USE BOLD COLORS AND IMAGES.** Eye-catching images and pops of color are the quickest way to grab attention.
- 2. KEEP YOUR TEXT SHORT, CLEAR, AND PUNCHY.** Once you've caught their eye, make it easy to scan. With so much information coming at us daily, people have become experts at skimming. Concise, well-structured content is key to holding their attention.
- 3. ALWAYS INCLUDE A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION (CTA).** If someone is engaged with your print material, guide them on what to do next. Encourage them to visit your website, follow on social media, or register online. QR codes are a great tool to make that next step quick and seamless too.

By following these three steps, you have the formula to create high-quality and impactful marketing materials that stand out.

Reminder! Printed flyers can do a lot more passive marketing in the community besides just being on your table at an event. Think of high-traffic spots like schools, coffee shops, diners, libraries, community centers, town halls, even your local post office. These places attract a lot of visitors and can offer great visibility for your recruitment marketing efforts.

## EVENTS THAT SPARK INTEREST

Being visible within your community is just as important as being visible online. Events are a great way to engage community members and showcase what your department is all about. These face-to-face experiences may be the motivation someone needs to join your team.

Community fairs, local parades, and your town's holiday events are all great ways to be active in your community, but how can you take events one step further?

Many people may show interest in volunteering, but the challenge is turning that interest into action. Creating events that help individuals visualize themselves as firefighters is an excellent way to encourage recruitment.

Think open houses with tours of your firehouse or ride-alongs. These are great opportunities for community members to spend a few moments experiencing your firehouse culture and what being a firefighter really looks like.

Another great way to increase your visibility starts with looking around your community and the potential partnerships. Are there businesses, local leaders, or a school you can partner with? Many

schools happily welcome fire departments for educational visits, offering a chance to teach fire safety and share what firefighters do.

These small interactions can leave a lasting impression and may inspire future firefighters. Building strong community partnerships not only boosts your department's visibility and trust, but could also be the spark that motivates someone to join your department.



## THE DIRECT APPROACH

Sometimes the best way to recruit is the oldest way: talking to people directly. Old school is often still the school of thought. Phone calls and face-to-face interactions put a human voice and a friendly face behind your department's message.

A phone call shouldn't feel like a telemarketer pitch – it should feel like a neighbor calling another neighbor. Keep it friendly, short, and personal, and you'll get past "Hello" without an immediate "Good Bye."

### SAMPLE PHONE SCRIPT.

Practice your phone calls with other members. Have them play "devil's advocate" and push back. Talk about it after and ask them what would have helped you get around their pushback. Role-playing is a huge asset to getting better on the phone. The more you're used to common pushback, the less scary it might feel when calling a real recruit.

### SCRIPT:

- >> INTRODUCTION:** "Hi [Name], this is [Your Name] with [Fire Department]. I'm reaching out because we're looking for new volunteers in town."
- >> HOOK:** "You've probably seen us at parades and events – but did you know we're always training and helping behind the scenes?"
- >> ASK:** "We're holding an open house on [Date/Time]. I'd love to see you there – can I count on you to stop by?"
- >> CLOSE:** "Even if now isn't the right time for you, do you know someone who might be interested?"
- >> PRO TIP (LISTEN!):** Have a short list of talking points in front of you (benefits, time commitment, training provided). And remember: a good call is 70% listening, 30% talking.

## **FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS: TURNING INTEREST INTO ACTION.**

When someone visits the firehouse, meets you at a community event, or stops by during an open house, that's your chance to make a strong impression.

Start with common ground: Ask if they live nearby, know someone in the department, or have ever thought about volunteering.

Share a personal story: Why did you join? What keeps you coming back? Personal stories are more powerful than statistics. Just like we said above: relationships matter. Think of relationships in your own life – people connect with stories that matter.

Offer a clear next step: Don't leave it at "Thanks for stopping by." Instead: "Here's a quick sign-up form – it just takes two minutes" or "Would you like to come to our next drill night and see what it's like?" If you leave it up to someone to complete an action later, chances are only a small percentage will actually follow through.

Great. But who should do the talking?

**NATURAL COMMUNICATORS:** Pick members who are approachable, patient, and comfortable talking to strangers.

**VARIED BACKGROUND REPRESENTATIVES:** Have both veteran members and newer recruits available. This shows people different perspectives such as long-term dedication and fresh enthusiasm.

**SOMEONE WHO REFLECTS THE AUDIENCE:** If you're talking to younger prospects, have a younger firefighter there. Talking to parents? A member with kids can speak to balancing family and service. This is about connecting, building trust, and finding common ground for a relationship even if it's a professional relationship.

### **QUICK ACTION CHECKLIST.**

- Keep phone calls short, friendly, and neighborly.
- Use a script but adapt it naturally through practice. Understand and expect that not every phone call is going to be picture perfect. And there is no bad call – each one of them is a learning experience to draw on for the next call(s).
- Listen more than you talk. And respond to what is being said, don't just wait for your turn to talk.
- In face-to-face conversations, share personal stories over stats. Stats are great, but relate them to real-world experiences.
- Always offer a clear next step (form, event, drill night). Be prepared for excuses – let them know it only takes a few minutes. At the very least, get their name and number to follow up later. Let them know you won't share their information with anyone else and that they can expect to hear from you soon, but that you won't spam them.
- Choose members who are approachable, relatable, and diverse in experience.

# KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

At its core, the fire service is about helping others. Firefighting requires courage and technical skills, but it also demands compassion, communication, and empathy.

By investing in our internal culture, marketing, and meaningful connections, we can build departments that not only attract new members but keep them engaged, supported, and proud to serve.

Recruitment and retention truly are our lifeline. Without them, the service collapses. Leadership is the thread that ties them together, and culture is the soil in which they grow. Every firefighter, leader, and community member has a role to play in ensuring that when the whistle blows, someone is there to respond.

Photo by Sidewinder Photography



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION RESOURCES

## DIGITAL ASSETS

- (1) Recruitment asset that can be used as a website header
- (1) Recruitment asset that can be used as an email header
- (1) Recruitment LED Display



# SOCIAL MEDIA ASSETS

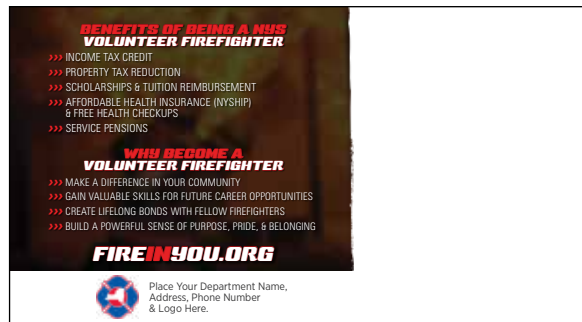
- (5) Social media designs that departments can post to encourage recruitment
- (5) Captions that departments can use when posting assets
  - “Ordinary People. Extraordinary Impact.”
  - “Be There When It Matters Most.”
  - “Skills That Last a Lifetime.”
  - “More Than a Team.”
  - “Step Into Something Bigger.”
- (1) Facebook cover image option encouraging recruitment



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION **RESOURCES** CONTINUED

## PRINT ASSETS

- (2) Posters (8.5x11) that departments can display at events
- (1) Flyer (8.5x11) that departments can hand out at events
- (1) Mailer that departments can send out to community members
- (1) Banner that departments could get printed to display at events



# OTHER ASSETS

- (1) Press release about recruitment and retention in NYS



CONTACT: (Insert name of Fire Department Contact Person & Phone Number)

**(INSERT FIRE DEPARTMENT NAME) TO PARTICIPATE IN STATEWIDE "RECRUITNY" OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND ((INSERT DATES))**

(Insert city/town/village name, N.Y.) — As part of the annual RecruitNY statewide initiative, the (insert name of your fire department) will open its doors so residents can learn how they can serve their volunteer fire department.

Volunteer fire departments across New York state have been faced with decreased membership and increased call volume. Like most volunteer fire departments, the (insert name of your fire department) needs to bolster its ranks so it can continue to provide the optimum level of protection for its residents.

As part of RecruitNY Weekend, the (insert name of your fire department) will open its doors on (insert date) from (time). The department is located at (insert FD's address and name of town.) It will join hundreds of volunteer fire departments across New York to raise public awareness regarding the need for volunteers and to highlight the rewards of being a member of a volunteer fire department.

Throughout the day, the (insert name of your fire department and delete or add to the following activities) will conduct tours of the station and apparatus, allow visitors to try on gear, demonstrate firefighting activities, provide information, and address questions on becoming a member. These activities give visitors a taste of what it means to be in the fire service. Volunteer firefighters will also be on hand to discuss the requirements and rewards of joining. All are welcome and encouraged to attend, including families with children.

(Sample quote): "We welcome the community to join us during RecruitNY Weekend," said (insert chief's full name and title). "This is an excellent opportunity for people to meet their local volunteer firefighters and learn more about the fire service. We are always looking for new members, and it is our hope that after meeting us, more people will be interested in becoming part of our family."

The Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) is committed to assisting New York's 1,700-plus volunteer departments connect with their communities and have sufficient members to protect them properly. Established in 2011, RecruitNY is an undertaking of FASNY. It is made possible by the continuing support and generosity of Lincoln Financial Group (LFG). In 2012, LFG announced the introduction of a new National Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) HEROPLUSM Program. A first of its kind, LOSAP was designed for individual fire and emergency services departments to help recruit, retain, and reward dedicated volunteers with a program that will help boost their retirement readiness.

For more information, visit (your department's website), or call us via our non-emergency phone number at (insert phone number).

###

## ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT & RETENTION RESOURCES

- 12 Month Recruitment Planner
- Candidate Experience Feedback
- Candidate Tracker
- FAQs
- Job Description
- New Recruit Checklists
- Personnel Tracker & Needs Assessment
- Prospective Volunteers Contact Form
- Recruitment & Retention Officer Standard Operating Procedure
- Recruitment Budget Planner
- Recruitment Letter
- Ride Along Standard Operating Procedure
- Ride Along Waiver

**PLEASE GO TO:**

FASNY's Recruitment & Retention Web page to download the recruitment and retention resources supplied to help your department be better equipped to recruit and retain the next generation of firefighters.





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