



# Tennessee Volunteer Workforce Solutions



## Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Assistance Available

The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association (TFCA) is pleased to announce the first phase of its Volunteer Workforce Solutions (VWS) program, which partners with national, state, and local organizations to support initiatives focused on the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters.

The program is seeking fifteen departments interested in taking advantage of research related to their own jurisdiction and leveraging turnkey marketing solutions for enhancing their volunteer recruitment strategies and efforts. VWS benefits include:

- Leadership support through the development and/or delivery of training and tools focused on the needs of volunteer and combination departments
- Recruitment and retention support, including development of unique recruitment strategies based on the features and characteristics of the community
- Department review to identify issues and challenges influencing the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters
- Strategic planning to increase department's visibility, viability and community support
- Customized printed recruitment materials and multimedia support
- GIS Tapestry reports to enhance the marketing and recruiting strategies of your department

If you are interested in participating in Phase I of the VWS program, the application can be found at [www.VolunteerFireTN.org](http://www.VolunteerFireTN.org). For more information about the program, please contact:

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*Please note: if your department currently has its own SAFER Recruitment and Retention award from FEMA, you still may be eligible to participate.*

**Learning from best practices in other departments, we established a centralized recruiting process. We realized the pool of possible volunteers was not what we expected.**

*-VWS Participant*

(see page 2)

## Volunteer Workforce Solutions Participant Requirements

- Eligibility**
- Department should have at least 50 active members. If you don't, you may still be eligible and should apply.
- Duration**
- Department must participate in the VWS program for up to three years.
- Leadership**
- Stakeholders on all levels (city/town/department manager; city/town/department fire chief; and company level chiefs/officers, elected official) must agree to participant requirements and sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU).
  - Identify a program leader or volunteer coordinator within your city/county/town/department who will manage and oversee the responsibilities associated with the VWS program. You may also select coordinator(s) at the company level, if applicable.
- Required Attendance**
- Key staff must attend and fully participate in the VWS Orientation webinar (April 2017) and Kick-Off Meeting (May 2017). Key staff includes: fire chief(s), chief officers, program leader, volunteer coordinator and ideally at least one representative from the elected governing body and the city/town administrator's office.
  - Key staff (fire chief, chief officers, program leader, volunteer coordinators, departmental leadership, company officers, volunteers, etc.) must attend one of the leadership symposia being sponsored by the program. At least two will be offered in Tennessee free of charge.
- Expectations And Activities**
- Submit home addresses of all members (career and volunteer, if combination department) in order to produce a customized GIS Tapestry Report. Names are not needed and all addresses will remain confidential and proprietary information.
  - Provide images and contact information for marketing materials.
  - Create and submit a list and timeline/12 month plan of recruitment/retention activities that will be carried out during the program.
  - Monitor, track, evaluate and provide data related to the results of the recruitment campaign to the VWS Program Team.
  - Submit monthly tracking forms and fill out all required information, including recruitment and retention data.
  - Respond to email, phone and written inquiries from the VWS Program Team in a prompt manner.
  - Participate in meetings and/or phone calls with the VWS Program Team.

## VWS Information and History

The Tennessee Fire Chiefs Association was awarded a SAFER recruitment and retention grant in 2016 to identify recruitment and retention goals, strategies and marketing methodologies that would benefit not only participating departments, but all fire departments in the state. The program will combine traditional recruiting methodologies with Geographic Information system (GIS) based methodologies. The GIS-based community-level profile is an analysis of existing firefighters that identifies the types of people who could be future firefighter candidates, and discusses the methods to best communicate with and recruit them. 15 departments will be selected to participate in Phase I of the program. The VWS program is also operating in Virginia through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association and Connecticut through the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association. There is also currently a National VWS effort focusing on diversity and new trainings.