

Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services

In 2004, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) worked in partnership with the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) to revise the 1998 text, Retention and Recruitment in the Volunteer Fire Service: Problems and Solutions.

The original text was based on a series of workshops bringing together volunteer fire service members from all the States. This edition has been enhanced with new research and current issues as the emergency services enter the 21st century. Many of the original reasons for the recruitment problems remain: lack of time, apathy, and excessive requirements. However, they appear to have become even greater issues with the passing of time.

Although the recruitment and retention challenges continue to grow, some volunteer organizations maintain good membership while others continue to function with reduced numbers. Those organizations that seek solutions and adapt to our changing personnel environment are successful. Individuals are still willing to give their time to volunteer emergency services organizations provided the following:

- The experience is rewarding and worth their time.
- The training requirements are not excessive.
- The time demands are adaptable and manageable.
- They are rewarded with a personal sense of value.
- There is good leadership minimizing conflict.
- There is ample support for the organization.

The emergency services are the most demanding of volunteer activities today. The physical and time demands associated with training; responding to incidents; maintaining facilities, apparatus, and equipment; fundraising; and administering a nonprofit corporation are grueling if not managed properly. In today's hectic world, strong leadership is required to make the emergency services the organizations that will attract volunteers. This text will cover many of the problems of recruitment and retention and provide some examples of solutions that have worked in volunteer organizations across the Nation.

Retention and Recruitment for the Volunteer Emergency Services: Challenges and Solutions (Second Edition) PDF (3.4 Mb)

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/fa-310.pdf> (PDF)



New York State Department of State
Office of Fire Prevention and Control
41 State Street
Albany, NY 12231-0001

- phone: (518) 474-6746
- fax: (518) 474-3240
- fire@dos.state.ny.us
- <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/fire/firewww.html>