Information Bulletin

Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Task Force Report Available

A Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Task Force was created in New York in 2020 and extended through 2022, for the purpose of making recommendations to improve volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention. The task force was specifically responsible for making recommendations on the following topics:

1. Identifying existing Office of Fire Prevention and Control firefighter training and delivery methods to enhance and streamline training including the use of distance learning;
2. The utilization of community colleges, BOCES or state accredited high schools to train firefighters and the creation of pilot programs that will offer Firefighter 1 certification;
3. Analyzing the feasibility and necessity of creating a recruitment and retention unit within the Office of Fire Prevention and Control;
4. Identifying existing and new tax incentives and benefits for volunteer firefighters;
5. Identifying existing recruitment and retention programs in other states and the feasibility of adopting similar programs in New York; and
6. Identifying incentives to assist in the recruitment of volunteer firefighters in under-represented and at-risk populations.

The task force members were separated into subcommittees to specifically review and evaluate each of the topics above to offer recommendations and to better identify ways to encourage individuals to volunteer at their local fire departments and implement strategies to retain existing members.

The report is now complete and can be accessed on our website here:

www.dhses.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/01/vff.task_.force_.report-final.pdf

Through the work of the task force, it became evident that there is no single "one size fits all" solution that will work for all communities. However, the task force does believe the recommendations in this report can make a positive difference in the volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention efforts across the state