



# GUIDE FOR CREATING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE DEPARTMENT















Diversity and inclusion are two familiar terms that are heard in today's fire service. Do you understand and support them? Having a work environment that embraces and recognizes individual differences while driving the overall mission and values of any fire-rescue department takes work. The *Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department* is your tool to learn, plan, implement, and preserve this environment within your own community and workforce.

A successful fire-rescue organization is determined by its overall culture and environment. Leaders who create a culture of diversity with inclusion not only improve their department but also their community. It is not enough to just have policies and procedures in place. It takes a commitment to diversity strategies and inclusive actions through education, leadership, accountability, and ownership by membership throughout every level of the organization.

You may hear of fire-rescue leaders who are comfortable with the status quo and believe that there is not an immediate need to achieve diversity and inclusion within their departments. These are the same departments that struggle with recruitment and retention. Without shifting their culture to embrace diversity and inclusion, it is estimated that they are able to recruit members successfully from only 35% or less of the population.

Creating a diverse and inclusive department requires acceptance, practice, and participation on all levels. It starts with your department's mission and values and is reinforced through proper training, protected by policy and procedures, practiced in communication, and driven through strategic plans, promotional processes, and performance reviews.

This *Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department* will direct you on the correct path for creating a department that employs diverse and inclusive practices and properly represents the community you serve. The users of this *Guide* will be able to create and support a mission-driven, community supported workforce that feels valued and is truly prepared to collectively take on the all-hazard first responder needs in your region.

#### Sincerely,

The Council for Future Volunteer Firefighters

# THE COUNCIL FOR FUTURE VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

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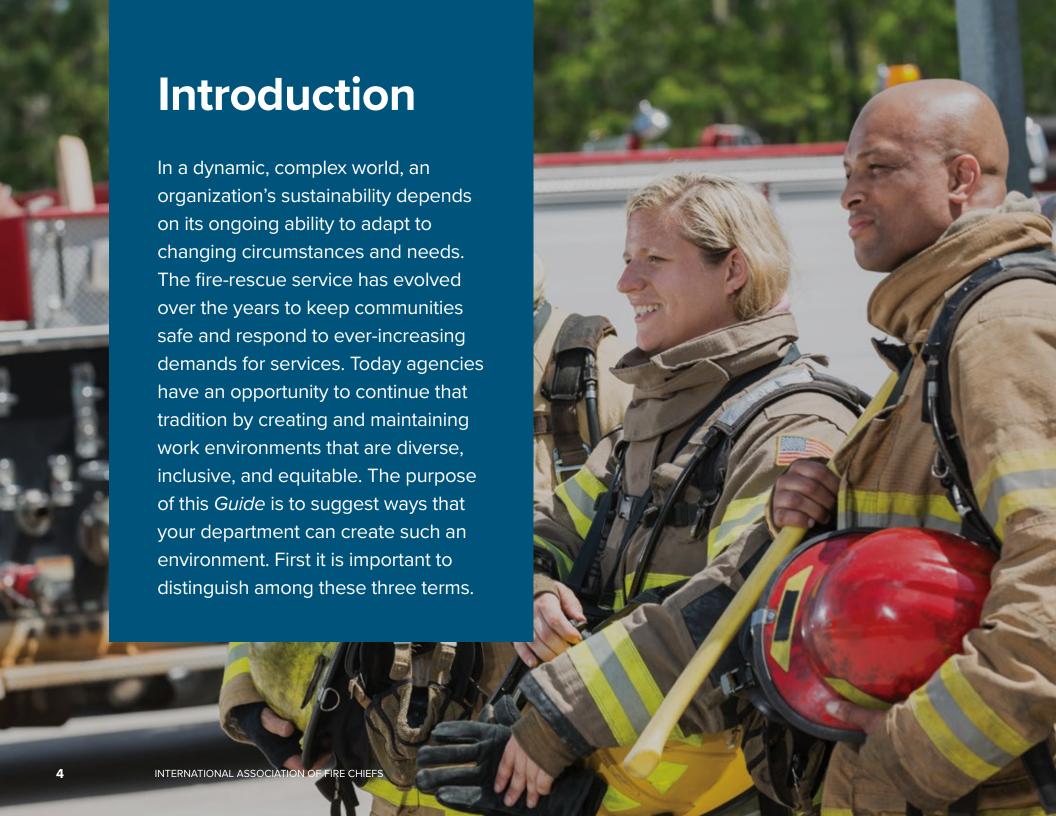
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#### Definitions

Diversity addresses the many ways in which people differ. Inclusion speaks to the extent to which people feel welcomed, respected, trusted, treated fairly, and valued. Equity reflects the ways in which we ensure equal opportunities for people to be who they are and how fairly we treat them. Note that equity and equality are not the same. In fact, treating people equally often results in inequities.

For purposes of this *Guide*, we define diversity very broadly, including every possible element on which people differ. In addition to the traits and characteristics we normally associate with diversity (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs), here are others that are relevant to the fire-rescue service: talents, skills, and competencies, especially those not related to firefighting or EMS; perspectives; leadership and management styles; parenthood status; language(s) spoken; type of membership; values; personal and career goals; communication preferences; interests and hobbies; physical and mental abilities; learning style preferences; educational level; legal status; positions or roles held; socioeconomic status; cultural norms; types of experience; family responsibilities; availability; and types of stakeholders.



#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

An agency can be diverse yet not inclusive.



**TIP:** Define "diversity" as broadly as possible.

### Benefits

Here are some examples of the benefits of embracing diversity, inclusion, and equity in the fire-rescue service:

**More creative and better decisions** result when there are varied perspectives

**High levels of support and buy-in** are demonstrated by stakeholders

**Recruitment efforts are more successful** when work environments are inclusive

Retaining engaged performers is easier

**Morale is high** because members are encouraged to use their talents

**Commitment to department initiatives is strong** when decision-making procedures are perceived to be fair

**Stress and burnout are low** because the right people are in the right positions and roles

Inclusive environments attract greater diversity



**DID YOU KNOW?** We have more in common with others than we think we do.

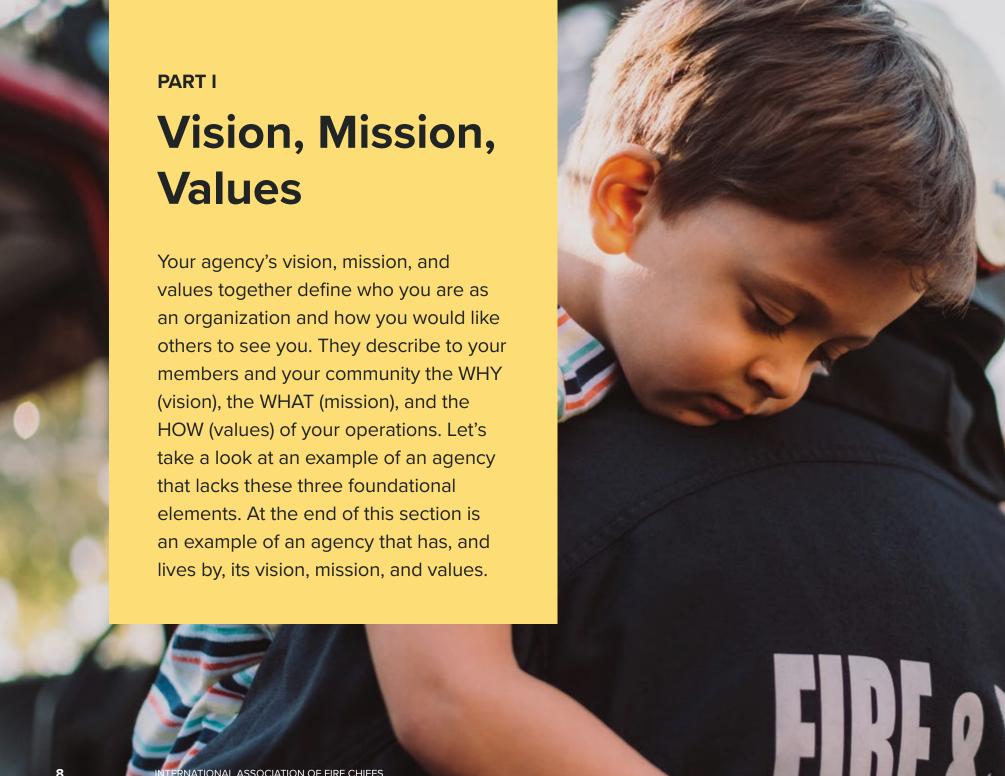


### Your Choice

Although creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable fire-rescue service may seem like a Herculean task, departments have an advantage that is familiar to their members in the form of an important tool: the incident command system (ICS). The type of change initiative we address in this *Guide* is similar to arriving upon the scene of an incident that you can see right away is bigger than the span of control of your current resources, something that is all too familiar within the volunteer fire-rescue service. The ICS provides a common structure that provides the flexibility to handle any situation as circumstances and resources change. You would not walk away from an incident because you do not have all the necessary resources on hand, so why would you walk away from the opportunity to create a safer, better, and more resilient fire-rescue service?

### Structure of the Guide

The *Guide* suggests ways you can increase the levels of diversity, inclusiveness, and equity in eight specific areas of your agency. Within each section, we provide a brief description of the area, a list of some of the expected benefits, "before" and "after" scenarios to help you understand those benefits more clearly, and implementation tips. An appendix contains a checklist for each section as well as some additional tools. A resources section suggests other materials you might find useful in creating or refining some of the documents or processes addressed here.



# This department does not have a stated vision, mission, or values

A young woman and her pre-teen brother walk into their local fire station to ask how she can become a volunteer. The first thing she sees on the wall is a poster displaying a firefighter walking through flames. Bulging muscles are visible even through the bunker gear, and the slogan below the picture emphasizes the extreme strength needed to succeed in this world. She notices that even though the station does not look very clean or well-kept, members are sitting around talking in small groups that seem to be segregated by age and ethnicity. When no one acknowledges their presence, the woman approaches one member to introduce herself and her brother and to express her interest in joining. The firefighter is friendly and offers to show them around. During the tour, the woman hears some volunteers laughing at an ethnic joke told at the expense of another member, who looks uncomfortable. The firefighter gives her a recruiting pamphlet for "firemen." He proudly shows them the department's new fundraising calendar, which features women in bikinis and bunker gear posed suggestively on the apparatus. At the end of the tour, the firefighter introduces the woman and her brother to the chief, who talks with them briefly then asks her, "What makes you think you can do this job?" Without waiting for an answer, he turns to her brother and says, "Come back to see us the day you turn 18. The department always has room for more firemen." The woman leaves, having received the clear message that she is not welcome there. Her brother, who had been excited about volunteering at the station when he was old enough, decides there is no way he would be part of a profession that treats people the way the fire chief treated his sister. Wait until he tells his friends...

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#### **Discussion**

Volunteer agencies that create a welcoming environment that values every person's skills and talents are able to recruit and retain the members they need to protect their communities and to keep each other safe on the job. One way to develop and maintain such a culture is to write and live by vision, mission, and core values statements that together convey a message of inclusiveness and equity. Let's first describe these statements and suggest ways you can create your own.



A **vision statement** describes the future to which your agency aspires. It answers the WHY question: what is the purpose of your organization? The most effective vision statements get buy-in from all stakeholders because they paint a compelling "big picture" that includes the entire community and focuses on the impact the agency has on its safety. The resulting vision benefits from the diversity of perspectives and is perceived as equitable, which increases stakeholders' commitment to achieving it. Your vision serves as a guide for developing your mission (the WHAT) and specifying your core values (the HOW). Together these elements will be your cornerstones for decision-making at all levels.

#### **VISION STATEMENT EXAMPLE**

Create safe, healthy, economically viable, and inclusive environments for all people in our community as well as for all of our members.



TIP: A community-focused vision gains more support than a department-centric one.



A mission statement specifies WHAT the agency does to achieve its vision. Generally it includes the primary functions or services, such as saving lives and protecting property. In addition to describing what it does for the community, the mission should address its commitment to providing an inclusive and equitable work environment. This statement will help attract a diverse pool of applicants because it sends the message that everyone's talents are welcome and valued.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT EXAMPLE**

Golden (Colorado) Fire Department's mission: The mission of the Golden

Fire Department's dedicated professionals is to enhance the quality of life for the Golden Community through fire and injury prevention, education, and the protection of life and property.



A **values statement** spells out the core principles that define HOW you are as an organization, provides a clear path to guide your agency's operations, and conveys the beliefs and ethics by which all of its members live, both on duty and off. Define your core values and commit them to writing. Values statements that explicitly recognize the rights of all individuals to mutual respect and require the acceptance of others without bias communicate unequivocally the agency's commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, and equity.

#### **VALUES STATEMENT EXAMPLE**

#### Burtonsville (Maryland) Volunteer Fire Department's Organizational Values

#### **WE VALUE:**

- The lives and property that we are entrusted to protect throughout our community.
- Character, integrity, and honesty and require both personal and organizational accountability.
- Reliability, each Member's commitment to excellence in training and performance, and a passion for community service.
- Leadership, teamwork, communication, innovation, collaboration, and initiative.
- Diversity, are respectful, courteous and inclusive of the talents and needs of all while focusing on the social good we do as an organization and as individuals.
- Tradition and the founding principles of loyalty and pride as they reflect the progressive heritage of our Department. We recognize and embrace the honor of carrying forward the legacy of those who served before us.

### **Implementation Tips**

The suggestions in this section will assist you in developing – or reviewing – and implementing your agency's vision, mission, and values. Please see Appendix A for a Vision, Mission, Values Checklist and worksheets to guide you through these processes. You also will find samples of completed worksheets to get you started.

# Development phase:

Recognize that creating vision, mission, and values statements is a process that takes time and reflection. They will define your agency and affect your members for years to come, so the time spent is a wise investment.

Invite your internal and external stakeholders to co-create your vision, mission, and values with you. Although an inclusive approach will take longer, you will obtain their buy-in and commitment.

**Use inclusive language.** For example, when a mission statement says the department serves the "community" rather than the "citizens," residents who are not citizens will feel included. Using "we" instead of "you" when talking with or about the community conveys a sense of common purpose.

Begin with the end in mind (vision), then work backward to create the mission and values. Think about taking a family vacation: if you set out before deciding where you are going, you won't know how to get there or what to take with you.

Keep the statements simple and both forward- and outward-looking. Your vision statement in particular should address the community's safety and health as well as that of your members.

**Describe each value** *in behavioral terms* at the agency, work unit, and individual levels. Though more time consuming, this approach paints a definitive "path" for people to follow.



# Implementation phase:

- Ratify or confirm all statements with your members before you go public.
- Ask your governing body to show its support by voting or otherwise formally affirming the statements.
- Refer to the statements regularly during meetings and in communications. People must see them as common goals. Reminding members of the vision they helped to create will reenergize them.
- Post the statements prominently in your station(s) and office(s) as well as on your website and/or social media. Communicate them to your community in person and social media as appropriate. Feature them in your recruitment materials.

- Make the statements your cornerstones for decision-making. Tie everything you do to them, including requests for resources.
- Gradually incorporate the statements into your processes, programs, and systems, such as performance reviews and promotions.
- Regularly "connect the dots" between tasks and activities and these statements so everyone can understand the value your agency provides.

#### **AFTER EXAMPLE**

# This department has, and lives up to, written vision, mission, and values statements

A young woman and her pre-teen brother walk into their local fire station to ask how she can become a volunteer. The first thing she sees on the wall is a collage of pictures of a diverse group of people wearing department t-shirts as they engage in various community activities. She notices how clean the apparatus bay is. Some members are participating in training exercises while others are doing chores. A firefighter who sees them standing outside comes over to greet them and invites them inside for a tour. As they walk around, the woman hears people laughing and engaging in good-natured joking with each other. "They sound a lot like our family when we get together," she whispers to her brother. The firefighter gives her a recruiting pamphlet that shows members filling a wide variety of roles, not just fighting fires or responding to medical calls. He proudly shows them the department's new fundraising calendar, which features the organization's partners and community events. At the end of the tour the firefighter introduces the woman and her brother to the chief, who listens attentively as they both express their interest. After explaining the volunteer application process, he says to the woman, "If you've got a talent or a skill you'd like to share with us, we have a place for you here!" Turning to her brother he says, "Families are an important part of our members' support system, and we welcome them here. I expect to see a lot of you! And when you turn 18, we will put you to work as well." The woman and her brother leave, convinced that they have found the perfect way to give back to their community and excited about the prospect of becoming part of an inspiring new family. Wait until they tell their friends...



YOUR CHOICE: Thrive by creating an inclusive, equitable culture OR struggle to survive.

PART 2

# Strategic Plan Development and Implementation

There are three critical reasons why your department, regardless of its type or size, must implement a strategic plan. 1) The plan provides a framework that enables you to achieve the agency's vision and mission while embodying its values. 2) It helps your leaders be more successful in predicting and managing change. While a strategic plan doesn't guarantee success, it reduces the likelihood of failure. 3) Leaders often become so preoccupied with immediate issues that they lose sight of long-term goals. Implementing a strategic plan will keep your department on track to achieve its vision and mission.



# This department does not have a strategic plan

Times are tough, and the town council has to make some difficult budgetary decisions. While its members are mindful of the need to ensure the public safety of its residents and visitors, they are concerned because fire department officials have failed to articulate a plan for the coming year. The number of volunteers has been decreasing while the town's population has increased, and its demographics are changing. At the budget meeting, the chief indicates that the department would continue to go with the flow, as reacting is what firefighters do best. When asked about the results of an initiative the council funded last year to attract new members, especially those who are representative of the newer demographics, the chief replies that they only had two people express interest, and neither one returned after they took a tour of the station. The agency doesn't seem to appreciate the benefits of creating an inclusive environment or to be capable of assessing potential opportunities because it lacks the framework to do so. Without a sense of direction, it is drifting just as the community needs it to step up. As a result, council members have lost faith in the fire department and decide to deny its request for additional funding.

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### **Discussion**

In the dynamic, complex world we live in today, it is more important than ever for fire-rescue agencies to have a plan for keeping their communities and their members safe. Though creating and implementing a multi-year plan may seem overwhelming, think of it as similar to the incident command system (ICS). Both processes identify the who, what, when, where, why, and how required to achieve the desired goal.

Thinking of a strategic plan as the administrative equivalent of the ICS you have used in the field will make it easier for you to put one together. They both have similar components: a structure, goal setting, functions, information required, process, reports, accountability mechanisms, and evaluations of effectiveness.

#### Here are some benefits of that approach:

Greater creativity made possible by diverse perspectives

**Acceptance of the outcome** when people perceive the development process as equitable

**A welcoming environment** when people feel they are heard, respected, valued, and trusted

**Widespread support** because stakeholders have a vested interest in ensuring the department achieves its goals

**High morale** when personnel have the opportunity to use their existing expertise and/or to develop new skills

**Mitigation of possible single-point failure**s because multiple people are involved



**DID YOU KNOW?** The benefits of an inclusive process easily outweigh the additional time it requires.







# **Implementation Tips**

The information in this section provides the rationale for many of the steps in the strategic planning process and lists some of the benefits of incorporating diversity, inclusion, and equity elements. Please see **Appendix B** for a *Strategic Plan Development and Implementation Checklist* as well as worksheets for writing and implementing strategic goals. You may find references to materials to help you develop a strategic plan in the Resources section.

### Strategic plan development:

**Treat your strategic plan as an ongoing process.** Review it regularly and update it as circumstances change and you achieve your stated goals.

Build your strategic plan on the foundations of your vision, mission, and values statements.

Invite your internal and external stakeholders to participate in the plan's development. This will result in widespread buy-in and commitment to your goals.

Integrate diversity, inclusion, and equity into your strategic plan. Here is why they are vital components to your success:

- People are more likely to volunteer and to stay when they
  feel respected, valued, and trusted because they believe their
  voices have been heard and their ideas considered seriously.
- An inclusive process provides an opportunity to educate stakeholders about your agency's value and to communicate the need for members with a wide range of skills and talents.
- Community members and decision-makers can become your advocates if they are able to "connect the dots" between your strategy and their own safety and well-being.



**DID YOU KNOW?** Good management and leadership practices incorporate diversity, inclusion, and equity elements.

Three to five goals are realistic. Ensure they are aligned clearly with your community's goals and have SMART characteristics. (See Appendix B.)

Use the incident command system (ICS) as an analogy for strategic planning and implementation. It is familiar to your members and it serves as a reminder that even when a task seems overwhelming, you still can do something with the resources on hand. Small steps are better than none.

Create a communication plan. It will increase the likelihood that your messages are clear, consistent, timely, and accurate. Distribute them through a variety of media. Communication should be a two-way street: diverse perspectives will result in better, more creative outcomes.

Share the draft strategic plan with your members before you release it publicly. Give them an opportunity to ask questions. Remind them that all members were invited to participate in its development.

Present the strategic plan formally to your governing body. Asking its members to show their support by voting to affirm the strategy gives them a vested interest in the department's success in achieving its goals.



# Strategic plan implementation:

- Hold a formal strategy implementation kickoff event. If the event is in-house, ensure
  members from all shifts can attend. Consider
  inviting the community, perhaps as part of an
  open house or other scheduled event. Invite
  the local media.
- Appoint a strategic plan advocate. This individual must have both the responsibility and the authority needed to ensure things get done so the plan stays on track over the long-term.
- Be prepared to manage the resistance to the changes represented by the strategic plan.

  Explain the rationale for the plan. Answer the "What's in it for ME?" question and let members know how the changes will affect them personally. Set the expectation that there will be challenges along the way.

- Continuously refer to the plan's goals during meetings and in communications.

  "Connect the dots" between members' tasks and activities so they see how they contribute to the big picture. Keeping that big picture front and center will keep people energized,
- Post your strategic plan on your website or social media. Community members who read it might see themselves as prospective volunteers. At the very least, they will understand what you are doing and why.

especially during tough times.

Align your services, processes, programs, and systems with your strategic goals. For example, they all must have measures of progress and achievement. Your performance evaluation system must support your promotional process.

# This department has developed and implemented a strategic plan

Times are tough, and the town council has to make some difficult budgetary decisions. The fire department has implemented a strategic plan whose goals are aligned with the town's goals, which include diversity, inclusion, and equity. Although the number of volunteers has decreased over the last few years while the town's population has increased and its demographics are changing, the chief has good news. Because the department's strategic plan calls for monitoring environmental trends, the agency took advantage of an opportunity to participate in a free national training program for volunteer recruitment and retention coordinators. The department's coordinator started implementing the new techniques immediately, which already have attracted a few new volunteers, including some young people and at least two applicants who are bilingual. The chief also notes that the agency's dated bylaws were amended to allow people whose skills and interests lie in areas other than firefighting and emergency medicine to join. This change will have a positive impact on the community's public safety by freeing firefighters and EMTs to do their jobs while the department's other functions and tasks are covered. Having members who speak their language and understand their culture could encourage newer residents to take an interest in volunteering. Confident that an investment in the fire department will pay big dividends for the community because of its clear sense of direction and promising results, council members vote to approve its additional funding request.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Develop an inclusive, equitable plan to keep your community and members safe OR flounder without clear direction.

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# Communication

Effective communication is the key to your agency's success. When people or organizations fail, ineffective communication often is the culprit.

Because we live in a noisy, dynamic, and complex world in which diversity abounds and inclusion results in exponentially better outcomes, good communication skills and the appropriate choice of media are critical to your ability to keep your community and your members safe.



# This department lacks an effective communication plan

The local fire-rescue department is struggling to recruit and retain quality members. Its newly appointed recruitment and retention coordinator's assessment of the situation is that the number of active volunteers has been decreasing steadily while the town's population has increased and its demographic profile has changed dramatically. Unlike the local non-profit agencies with whom it competes for volunteers, the department has not articulated or communicated a compelling, clearly stated vision to the community. Residents do not even know that their fire department is all volunteer! No wonder the possibility of joining is not even on their radar. Recruitment traditionally has relied heavily on word of mouth, so members tend to share the same demographic characteristics. Existing marketing materials, which target 18-30-year old white males and are available in English only, are a non-starter given the diversity of the town's residents. The department has no social media presence despite the number of young people who live in town, whose ranks are augmented by students at the nearby community college. Many volunteers have resigned over the last few years; it is widely known that they did not feel valued or able to do their jobs properly because officers "hoard" information, and they do not listen to members or take their ideas seriously.

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### **Discussion**

Just as the ICS provides a useful structure for achieving the goal of a large-scale operation, an effective communication plan enables your department to accomplish its mission more easily because it mitigates the possibility that important issues will fall between the cracks. The best communication plans address the agency's overall and ongoing needs and are supplemented as appropriate with strategic initiative-specific plans.

# In addition to making your job easier, implementing an effective communication plan offers these benefits:

**Increased community support** because you demonstrate the department's value

**Greater coverage of all positions/roles** because you attract volunteers with diverse talents, skills, and interests

A more inclusive environment because people feel they are heard, understood, and taken seriously when they have a voice in decisions about changes that affect them

**Greater commitment to achieving department goals** because people are included in their development

Increased confidence that your intended message was received

**Community expectations are met or exceeded** because ongoing conversations and interactions keep you apprised of their needs

Accurate and timely dissemination of information throughout the agency

Decreased likelihood that important issues will slip between the cracks







# **Implementation Tips**

This section provides suggestions about what information and elements you may want to include in your communication plan. Please see **Appendix C** for a *Communication Checklist*.

- Listening is the most important aspect of communication.

  Let your members know that you value their ideas and opinions and take them seriously.
- Seek the positive in every situation. Whether we look for the negative or the positive, we will find it. Redefining a problem as an opportunity changes the conversation and sends people in a different direction to find a solution.
- Clear and consistent communication is your best retention tool. Be specific: do not make people guess what you want them to do. Ensure your messages on any given topic are consistent. Align your body language and tone of voice with your verbal message. Avoid using acronyms, technical terms, and jargon.
- Lead with the outcome; provide details only if needed. Few people care HOW you saved the day for them, they just want to know that you did. Tell people what they need to know, not everything you know. Avoid data dumping.
- Use relevant stories, analogies, and metaphors. A familiar context will help people understand your meaning or message quickly.
  - ?

**DID YOU KNOW?** Though challenging, listening is the most important aspect of communication.



- Be diverse and inclusive with media options. Know what communication mechanisms are available and what social media platforms are used by your stakeholders. Ask people what their preferences are for receiving information, such as websites, the local paper, TV, or radio. Honor those preferences when possible.
- Use inclusive language. For example, use "family" or "brotherhood and sisterhood" instead of "brotherhood." Substituting "we" for "you" helps people feel part of a group. Avoid inappropriate words, stories, or "jokes." Words matter. Reaping the benefits of a diverse and inclusive work environment requires all members to hold each other accountable for treating everyone respectfully and professionally.
- Utilize members' communication strengths. Identify people with communication-related talents such as writing, speaking, presenting, facilitating, storytelling, persuading, or speaking other languages.

  Call on them for assistance when you need their particular talent.
- Communication includes much more than the words you say.

  Make sure written correspondence uses proper grammar and spelling. Your appearance and body language send a message about you and your agency. Conveying a professional image boosts morale and attracts potential volunteers.
- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of your communication efforts. Consider content and delivery methods. Make changes as needed.



# This department reaps the benefits of effective communication

The local fire-rescue department is proud of its ability to recruit and retain quality members. When the number of active volunteers started to decrease while the town's population was increasing and its demographic profile changing dramatically, it created a recruitment and retention coordinator position to turn things around. Focusing on communication is enabling the department to achieve that goal. For example, asking residents how they prefer to receive information enables the agency to reach more people by targeting the appropriate media. Creating and communicating widely a clearly stated, compelling public safety vision, and referring to that vision consistently and often, alerts community members to the fact that their all-volunteer fire department needs and welcomes their talents and skills. Regularly engaging with residents at special events, reaching out to business owners, offering public safety education programs, and holding its own events such as an open house is raising the department's public profile dramatically. Its welcoming environment has been credited with attracting volunteers more easily. Creating a position whose purpose is to handle social media enables the agency to reach more people, including younger folks. Marketing materials are up to date and available in Spanish as well as English. Providing communication skills training for all members that includes giving and receiving constructive feedback and managing conflict has reduced tensions between officers and members. Information now is shared widely and members report that their ideas are being received and discussed, which is helping the department's retention efforts.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Win your community's support with a pro-active communication plan OR hope for the best with an unstructured approach.

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# Policies and Procedures

Policies are guiding principles that set the direction for an organization; procedures are the steps necessary to operationalize the policies. Together they provide a roadmap for making decisions, complying with laws, and taking action. For this reason, they must provide specific guidance about how the agency demonstrates its commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity throughout the organization. Policies and procedures are aligned with, yet more specific than, the department's core values and strategic goals. For purposes of discussion here, policies and procedures encompass Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs).

# This department lacks effective written policies and procedures

The local fire-rescue department's struggle to recruit and retain quality members was exacerbated recently when some of its members made the news for the wrong reasons. A hazing incident was caught on video and posted on social media sites. In addition, bullying is rampant, with leaders often condoning and sometimes participating in it. Not only did the "prank" endanger a rookie's physical safety and the bullying create a toxic work environment, those behaviors have tarnished the agency's public image and caused morale to plummet. Although the members and leaders know better than to have engaged in that kind of behavior, there are no written policies or procedures that address them, or mechanisms by which to hold them accountable. Some of the errant members are part of the fire chief's inner circle, so no one expects that they will suffer any consequences. Members are upset because the lack of policies and procedures puts them at risk and creates liabilities for the department due to its failure to abide by local and federal laws. No one is happy about the way the only two female members were harassed and marginalized during their time on the job. A few members cite the near absence of accountability of their leaders as they reluctantly conclude that this incident is the last straw for them.

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### **Discussion**

Policies and procedures are designed to help keep people safe, conduct their tasks effectively, and make consistent, logical, and legal decisions. Although many policies address operational issues, people are equally important. How individuals are treated and how they perceive others are treated weigh heavily in their decisions about whether to become volunteers. Volunteer departments are not subject to some federal and state labor and employment laws, which often represent good management practices. Local regulations are likely to apply to volunteer departments, so be sure to check with an employment attorney on a regular basis.



### In addition to making everyone's job easier, here are other benefits your department can realize by developing and adhering to effective policies and procedures:

Increased safety of members and the community because of the consistency in operations

**High morale** because all members feel valued, including those with the talents, skills, and interests to fill roles other than firefighter and EMT

Lower levels of stress and burnout because members are able to perform the roles for which they are most interested and qualified

An inclusive environment because written policies convey clearly the agency's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity while procedures spell out how it will demonstrate that commitment

**Increased retention rate** because of the welcoming environment

Ability to recruit qualified individuals because people perceive that the department's processes are equitable and they will be treated with respect for who they are and whatever talents and skills they bring to the table

A sense of pride in the department by members and the community because of its demonstrated professionalism

Confidence that members will be treated fairly and held accountable for their actions and decisions



**DID YOU KNOW?** People-related policies and procedures are just as important as those related to operations.

# **Implementation Tips**

The information in this section provides suggestions about issues you may want to address in your policies and procedures and how you might approach them. Please see **Appendix D** for a *Policies and Procedures Checklist*.

- Policies are aligned with the department's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals and consistent with applicable laws and regulations. They address both operational and administrative issues and are written in clear, easily understandable language.
- Procedures reflect a range of specificity. They strike a balance between providing enough information to ensure consistency of operations and decision-making, and allowing the flexibility required to manage people and operations in a dynamic, complex environment.
- Policies and procedures address concerns that arise in a diverse work environment. Use inclusive language. Provide guidance about issues such as station facilities, grooming standards, and personal needs or accommodations such as those that arise from family circumstances, religious beliefs, disabilities, or military service. Make it clear that behaviors such as hazing, harassment, and bullying are not tolerated.
- Members perceive the policies and procedures to be procedurally fair. Their development and administration are transparent, free of bias, non-discriminatory, and offer meaningful opportunities for input by those who will be affected by them. The members' perceptions are the ones that count.



**TIP:** Members are more committed to policies when they have a voice in developing or changing them.

- There are clear accountability mechanisms. Providing a rationale for policies and procedures will encourage members to adhere to them because they understand the "why" behind them. A clear statement that there are consequences for non-compliance will reinforce the need to make choices and decisions consistent with them. Having members sign a statement saying they have read and understood the policies and procedures emphasizes the gravity of adhering to them. For example, a social media policy that enables accountability and clearly conveys consequences for non-compliance is imperative.
- The policies and procedures are communicated widely.

  Members must know what the policies and procedures require, why compliance is necessary, how to apply them, and where to find them.
- The effectiveness and completeness of policies and procedures are evaluated regularly. Changes in the community's needs, the agency's circumstances, technology, national standards, or applicable laws should trigger a review of applicable policies and procedures. New ones may be necessary or existing ones may become obsolete. Make changes as needed. Establish a process for changes outside the regular review process.









## This department has effective written policies and procedures

The local fire-rescue department's struggle to recruit and retain quality members was eased significantly during the past year after the agency's entire leadership team was replaced after an investigation by town officials turned up clear evidence of a pattern of discrimination and bullying. In the short time the new team has been in place, leaders have made a great deal of progress in creating structure in the agency, conducting training for all members about the new policies and procedures, and implementing accountability mechanisms that apply to everyone across the board. One of the first actions was amending the bylaws to allow people with skills other than fire suppression and emergency medicine to become members. Other obstacles to recruitment also were removed or mitigated. As word gets out that the new work environment is very welcoming and inclusive, many of the members who had resigned begin to return. The number of applications from prospective volunteers is at an all-time high. Importantly, some applicants are women, while others are residents in low-income areas of town. It looks like the department is on its way to being well staffed.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Enhance your recruitment and retention efforts by ensuring department policies and procedures clearly convey the agency's commitment to inclusion and equity OR struggle to maintain the staffing needed to keep your members and community safe.

PART 5

## **Job Descriptions**

Used properly, job descriptions can be an agency's best friend. In addition to providing information such as the tasks and responsibilities required for the successful performance of those in a given position or role, they can be used to recruit new members, establish performance expectations, ensure the right people are in the right positions, and convey what's needed for promotions or advancement. Ideally you will have a written job description for every current and anticipated position or role in the organization. A human resources (HR) person should have the expertise needed to help you achieve this goal.



## This department lacks current job descriptions

The local fire-rescue department's struggle to recruit and retain quality people stems in part from its members' inability to tell prospective volunteers what exactly they are signing up to do. They are not even clear about their own responsibilities, as they never have seen a job description. Instead, they jump in wherever needed and hope their training has prepared them for the task at hand. The chain of command is not clear, which sometimes causes tension in the station and minor chaos on scene. Relations definitely are strained between career and volunteer members, who accuse each other of doing "their" jobs or taking "their" shifts. There is a high level of stress in the station as a result. Members who want to be promoted are not sure what it would take for them to be considered. In response to a rookie's request to see a job description, the chief dug up a file from the 1970s that contained two descriptions, one for "fireman" and the other for "ambulance driver." Aside from the outdated language and the lack of descriptions for other positions, few of the vague tasks listed are relevant today. "No wonder there's so much confusion around here," thought the rookie.

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### **Discussion**

Job descriptions are another foundational tool of well-run departments. Whether your crew will have your back when you need help depends in part on whether they are in the right positions, have had the appropriate training, and are able to meet the required performance standards. Effective job descriptions will help you assess those three critical factors. They also enable recruiters to describe clearly the requirements and expectations for each position or role so prospective members can make informed decisions about whether or not the fire-rescue service is for them. Job descriptions can reduce conflict or tension caused by role "boundary" disputes by identifying the tasks and responsibilities of each position.

# Here are some additional benefits your department can realize by developing and maintaining accurate, complete, and current job descriptions for every position and role:

**Increased safety of members and the community** because the right people are in the right positions or roles

**High morale** because members feel valued when they are able to help keep their community safe by utilizing their talents and skills

**Lower levels of stress and burnout** because adequate staffing enables members to focus on doing tasks they are good at rather than being distracted and perhaps frustrated by regularly performing those for which they have little interest or talent

**An inclusive environment** because the department welcomes those who have talents other than firefighting and emergency medicine

**Success in recruiting** because prospective members have a clear picture of how they can contribute to their community's safety

**Increased retention rate** because members know what's expected of them

Ability to target recruitment efforts at subject matter experts such as those in budgeting, accounting, social media, or marketing because members can tell them specifically how they can put their skills to work in service to the community



## **Implementation Tips**

The information in this section provides suggestions about how to develop and use job descriptions in your department. Please see **Appendix E** for a *Job Descriptions Checklist*.

- Ensure there is an accurate, complete, and updated job description for every current and future position or role in the department. No exceptions. Both people- and operations-related requirements are included. New and updated documents are approved by Human Resources (HR), the fire chief, and/or a designee.
- Invest the time necessary to create job descriptions. The benefits listed in this section indicate you will receive a huge return on that investment. If you do not have an HR person, find an expert to help you, perhaps someone from a nearby college or a local business. Invite your members to be part of this effort: they will be affected by the outcomes, and they know their jobs better than anyone.
- arise in a diverse work environment. Use inclusive language such as "firefighter" instead of "fireman." List only tasks and responsibilities that clearly are related to the job being described. For example, it is possible that not everyone needs to become proficient in throwing a ladder. Set performance standards at the lowest acceptable level, neither diluted nor unnecessarily high. Focus on what people can do rather than what they cannot.

- Make your job descriptions easily accessible. Members should have a copy of their own job description and easy access to other job descriptions. If you post the documents on your website, prospective members can find them while others who never thought about volunteering may see a position or role that matches their talents and skills.
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness and completeness of your job descriptions. Ideally, all job descriptions are reviewed and updated during the annual performance review process. Significant changes in position responsibilities or tasks should trigger an immediate update, as would creating new positions or roles. Noting on the form the date that each job description is created or updated ensures you have the most recent version.



TIP: Job descriptions that address performance expectations related to the agency's values and people-related policies and procedures convey a powerful message about the department's commitment to inclusion and equity.











# This department has current, accurate, and complete job descriptions that address both people and operations aspects of each position

The local fire-rescue department has found it much easier to recruit and retain quality members since it decided to create job descriptions for all of its positions and roles. Members can tell prospective volunteers exactly what they are signing up to do. They are clear about their own responsibilities and appreciate the fact that they were invited to help create the job descriptions initially and now have an opportunity every year to ensure the documents are up to date and include the tasks and responsibilities relevant to the position being described. Because members perceive that development process as fair, they are confident that key decisions made using the descriptions, such as attendance at training classes, participation in professional development programs, and promotions, will be equitable. Members know what is expected of them and who they report to. The previous tension between career and volunteer members has disappeared, as disagreements or lack of clarity about who is responsible for what can be resolved by reviewing the relevant job descriptions. Members who want to be promoted can determine easily what it will take for them to be considered. In short, job descriptions have had a major positive impact on members as well as on the department as a whole.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Attract and retain members by using job descriptions to demonstrate clearly the agency's commitment to ensuring an inclusive and equitable environment OR enable people to assume that outcome is not important to the department and the community.

PART 6

## Training and Development

The number one reason people leave organizations is dissatisfaction with their immediate supervisor. Often the problem stems from a lack of leadership development, an avoidable and controllable outcome. While fire-rescue professionals typically undergo extensive training in operational areas, the same cannot be said about non-operational areas. Too often, people who pass the FFI and FFII tests are promoted without any assessment of their interpersonal or leadership skills. It is truly scary to think that the safety of your members and community could be at risk because of a lack of leadership skills.



## This department provides minimal training and development opportunities

The local fire-rescue department recently experienced a close call during a structure fire that was attributable to the crew's lack of training. The unease that had been building about the agency's lackadaisical approach to training suddenly became a serious concern. Around the kitchen table that night, some younger members conducted their own assessment of how this situation could have occurred. One problem is that older members who subscribe to the "We've always done it this way" mindset are very resistant to training, and the chief has given up on changing their behaviors or holding them accountable. Another concern is that favoritism is the primary determinant of who gets to go to training. Since none of the crew members at that incident are on the "favorites" list, they still are waiting for the training that could have prevented the errors they made. A major problem that contributed to the close call was the incident commander's widely known inability to make timely and accurate decisions. A firefighter with relevant experience obtained at another agency offered a suggestion, only to be told to obey orders instead of trying to give them. There was no after-action debrief, and the commander did not even speak to the crew after they returned to the station. The members conclude that department leaders demonstrate little awareness of the need to develop people or pay attention to their well-being. There has been no effort to allocate funds for training and development purposes. Most training instructors are long-time members who are not always credible, so the young members wonder if they can trust what they are being taught.

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## **Discussion**

Although there is a cost to training, there are informal methods that can help get and keep your members up to speed in some areas. For example, try adding 30-minute training modules to membership meetings, integrating "soft skills" into monthly trainings, and/or conducting informal tabletop training around the kitchen table.



## Here are some benefits that can be obtained by creating and maintaining a robust and inclusive training and development program:

Increased safety of members and the community because members are well-trained

A high level of confidence that members' colleagues will be able to have their backs when they need help

A high level of trust in department leaders because they regularly engage in professional development

Perception that the process for requesting or being selected for training is equitable

**High retention rate** because members and leaders obtain the training and development needed to meet the performance standards of their respective positions

### Increased ability to recruit qualified individuals

because potential volunteers perceive that the physical requirements of training for each job are appropriate and realistic

## Active engagement with members of underrepresented groups in the community

because the department offers training that enables its members to connect with them effectively, such as "Spanish for first responders," implicit bias, and cultural awareness



**DID YOU KNOW?** Training requirements and standards must be job-related and based on actual needs.

## **Implementation Tips**

This section provides suggestions about how you might structure and present equitable training and development programs in your department. Please see **Appendix F** for a *Training and Development Checklist*.

- Training and development opportunities are aligned with the department's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals and consistent with applicable laws and regulations. Training requirements and standards must be related clearly to the job.
- Training and development topics are informed by, and feed into, relevant processes and systems such as individual development plans, performance reviews, job descriptions, and promotions. For example, officers are trained in how to use the performance review system most effectively.
- **Each new recruit is assigned to an appropriate mentor** who has been trained for that role.
- All required training is completed in a timely manner by every member. Training in mental and behavioral well-being should be required of all members, beginning in the recruit academy and continuing throughout members' careers. A debrief and/or appropriate form of assessment of learning should be conducted after all classes. Opportunities for practice should be provided as appropriate.
- All supervisory level personnel undergo leadership training and engage in ongoing professional development. Change management, interpersonal skills, conflict management, and diversity and inclusion are topics that should be addressed. Assess the effectiveness of leaders' applications of what they learn through the performance review system.



- Members and leaders take the courses needed to enable them to create and maintain an inclusive and equitable work environment. Some courses are required, such as those related to preventing bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Others are meant to equip members with the tools they need to serve the community better by learning how best to interact with them.
- Training is not always the solution to a problem. Sometimes people are not capable of doing what is required, or they do not want to do it. Assess whether training truly is needed or if a different intervention is more appropriate.
- There is a formal or informal training director whose role is to communicate the availability of classes and ensure their effectiveness.
- Members perceive that the process for selecting participants for training and development opportunities is procedurally fair.

  Its development and administration are transparent, free of bias, non-discriminatory, and offer meaningful opportunities for input by those who will be affected by them. The members' perceptions are the ones that count.
- The effectiveness and completeness of your training and development programs are evaluated regularly. Provide a process for members to suggest new courses or programs and/or suggest those that no longer are relevant. Make changes as needed.



## This department has a robust and inclusive training and development program

The local fire-rescue department has developed a culture in which every individual, regardless of rank or position, is considered a leader. Consequently, training and professional development are a priority, even when funding is tight. From the time people walk in the door, they are assigned a mentor and afforded opportunities for personal and professional growth. This emphasis is evident in the community, as observers see that all members are on the same page, they work as a team, they look and behave like professionals, and they appear to be confident in their level of expertise. As a result, the number of applications the department receives has jumped noticeably. Morale is high as members are able to work effectively and efficiently in the field, connect regularly with residents in all parts of the town, and feel prepared to step up into a leadership role at a moment's notice. They watch out for each other's behavioral and physical health and well-being as well as their own by practicing the skills and using the knowledge they gained in their classes. Many members are involved actively in the department's mentoring program, and a pipeline of highly qualified members is growing over time.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Ensure your training and development programs support the safety of your members and the community OR run the risk of an unacceptable level of public safety.

PART 7

# Individual Development Plans and Performance Reviews

The purpose of development plans and performance reviews is to set individuals up for success in their current positions or roles as well as in those they may take on in the future. Think of them as individual strategic plans designed to help members achieve their career goals. The *individual development plan* (IDP) articulates the desired end result and specifies the steps needed to achieve it. It is a dynamic document that changes as career goals evolve and interim goals are achieved; implementation is key to success. The *performance review* process is a personal accountability mechanism that ensures individuals stay on track to achieve their career goals by assessing their progress and achievements and making adjustments as needed.

# This department doesn't use individual development plans or conduct performance reviews

The morale level at the local fire-rescue department is low. The last couple of promotions went to people who are more popular than competent; one before that went to a relatively new person who has a lot of education but not much experience. More senior people feel devalued because book learning is given greater weight than fire ground experience. Most members worry about the lack of leadership abilities. Thanks to some bad behaviors by a couple of lieutenants that caused some volunteers to resign, everyone now must undergo mandatory diversity and inclusion training. They feel like they are being punished, and their resentment shows in the field as well as in the station. Some members think they could do a better job than the current leaders. But do they really have what it takes? Without a formal evaluation process, they cannot tell. A few training "junkies" take courses because they enjoy the camaraderie that goes along with those experiences. Does that make them better leaders? Members who are considering promoting have a number of questions: what opportunities other than fire suppression or EMS are available? What are the requirements and how can I meet them? Will I miss out on opportunities because there are educational or certification requirements that take time to acquire? Is it realistic for me even to think I have what it takes to move up the ranks? Since the department has a history of promoting people based on seniority or popularity, is it worth the effort to try to promote? No one seems to be able to answer those important questions.

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## **Discussion**

Although the focus of individual development plans and performance reviews is on members, benefits accrue to the department as well. As is the case with a strategic plan, implementation is the key to success.

## There are other similarities with the strategic plan:

- IDPs begin with the end in mind and work backward to identify the steps needed to achieve it. The goal is subject to change over time as people's careers progress and evolve.
- Measures of progress and achievement identify how well people are doing and what areas need attention.
- Performance reviews provide feedback to help individuals stay on track. They provide structure for formal comments and opportunities for informal advice and suggestions.
- The IDPs and performance reviews inform and shape one another over time.



**TIP:** Asking "Have you ever thought about becoming a fire chief (or other position)?" may encourage members to consider bigger career goals.



## Here are some benefits your department can realize by implementing individual development plans and a performance review system:

**High likelihood of organizational success** because the plans and reviews are aligned with the agency's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals

**Confidence in department leaders** because promotions are based on operational and interpersonal competence rather than on irrelevant factors such as popularity or demographic characteristics

**Ability to meet or exceed community expectations** as members learn to appreciate and respect cultural expectations, needs, and practices

**An inclusive environment** when members understand that a wide range of diverse perspectives results in better outcomes for everyone

**High level of trust in leaders** who ensure that department processes are equitable

**High morale and retention rates** because members are motivated by their personal sense of purpose

**Ability to recruit qualified individuals** because people perceive that they will be treated with respect for who they are as well as for their talents and skills

Confidence that members will be treated fairly and held accountable for their actions and decisions

## **Implementation Tips**

This section provides suggestions about how to create and use individual development plans and performance reviews in your department. Please see **Appendix G** for *Individual Development Plans and Performance Reviews Checklists*.

- Management's responsibility is developing the processes and providing the appropriate training for leaders and members to use them. A collaborative effort between members and leaders ensures greater buy-in and increases the likelihood of individual and organizational success. HR should be part of this process.
- Development goals and performance expectations are aligned with the department's vision, mission, values, and strategic goals. Success is likely when everyone is headed in the same direction. When "everyone" is taken literally and inclusion becomes the norm, the chances for success increase significantly.
- IDPs and performance reviews are connected with, and inform, other agency processes such as the strategic plan, training and development, retention, promotion, and creating an inclusive and equitable work environment. HR should oversee this process.
- IDPs and performance reviews provide opportunities to raise awareness of the benefits of embracing diversity, inclusion, and equity. The department's ability to solicit insights and tap into the talents of a wide variety of people results in more creative options. People who feel welcomed, respected, valued, and trusted will respond in kind and are more likely to volunteer to share their talents and skills. Equity increases the likelihood that people can maximize their skills and talents.

- DPs and performance reviews can increase perceptions of procedural fairness in department processes. When they serve as the bases for making decisions about training and development and promotional processes, members have more trust in their leaders and confidence in their own and others' abilities. Potential volunteers are likely to be attracted by agencies with a reputation for fairness.
- Members and leaders are subject to clear accountability mechanisms. Performance reviews hold people accountable for meeting required performance standards and leaders accountable for providing the timely feedback and support necessary to help personnel be fully successful.
- Performance reviews focus on behaviors and results.

  Unless there is a sound business or safety reason for following a specific methodology, accept that there likely is more than one way to achieve the desired end goal. In those situations, using an alternative method is not a cause for discipline.

- Communication is key to successful implementation of IDPs and performance reviews. The effectiveness of these tools depends heavily on the quality, accuracy, completeness, and frequency of the messages. Good feedback requires honest, constructive, two-way conversations.
- All personnel participate in evaluating the effectiveness and completeness of the IDPs and performance reviews. The assessments must be conducted at the individual and organizational levels. Are they helping members achieve their career goals? Do they enhance the department's ability to achieve its vision, mission, and strategic goals? Does everyone demonstrate the agency's core values on and off duty? Make changes as needed.



# This department ensures each member has an individual development plan and participates in the agency's performance review process

The morale level at the local fire-rescue department has hit an all-time high. After their initial resistance to the implementation of individual development plans (IDPs) and performance reviews, members have embraced both as essential to their own success as well as the agency's. The IDPs require them to think deeply about their long-term career goals and priorities. Several members realized that reaching their goals requires a degree, certification, or level of experience that takes years to earn, and they are grateful to have made that discovery in a timely manner. Given the reactionary nature of their profession, members find the structure of the IDP helpful in keeping them on track to reach their goals. The performance review system enables them to gauge their progress toward their career goals as well as assess how they are doing in their current positions. The constructive feedback they receive helps them focus on improving their strengths and mitigating their weaknesses. It also identifies resources to help accelerate their progress, such as participating in the department's mentoring program. Having a plan customized for their current and future success has energized members and doubled their confidence. Now that they are looking for ways to improve, they view the mandatory diversity and inclusion training that once felt like punishment as key to their success. Their community also is reaping the benefits of their new perspectives and actions.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Become a sought-after agency for volunteers by treating members equitably and helping them succeed OR miss opportunities to recruit new members.

PART 8

# Valuing Each Other and Our Community

Firefighters often describe themselves as belonging to a fire "family" or brotherhood and sisterhood. It is no secret that families become dysfunctional when their members fail to appreciate and support each other. Similarly, fire-rescue agencies and the communities they serve have an interdependent and potentially synergistic relationship. However, that potential can be achieved only when both parties recognize and value each other.

## Members of this department do not value each other or their community

The local fire-rescue department is having an increasingly hard time responding to calls for service because it keeps losing members. It did not take long for a new volunteer to figure out why: the atmosphere is toxic. Members tend to gather in groups according to distinct categories such as ethnicity, age, and career vs. volunteer. The few interactions that occur often are unpleasant: when the department's volunteer bookkeeper approached a group of senior firefighters recently to ask a question about an invoice, they ignored her. Someone from another group said in a loud voice, "If you have to ask for help, you don't belong here." There is no evidence or discussion of the department's mission or values either in the Academy or in the station. Maybe that is why members seem so disjointed and disengaged. The rookie has observed a similar disconnect with the community: the department has little presence there because members decline to attend outside events. Last Christmas, a family that recently moved down the street brought homemade tamales to the station. Although no one in the family spoke English, their friendly intention was clear. Instead of asking a member who is bilingual to come out to speak to the family, the lieutenant simply shrugged and said, "No speak Spanish," then went back into the station. Members act as if they do not care about anyone outside their own clique, either at the station or in the community. The rookie decides to go elsewhere.

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## **Discussion**

What does valuing each other and your community look like?

### Here are some indicators:

- Everyone is welcome.
- People's behaviors demonstrate professionalism and respect for each other and community members.
- People feel safe in expressing contrary opinions, bringing up sensitive subjects, and asking questions about others' cultures or practices.
- Conversations are two-way. People who disagree do not make the conflict personal. While they try to resolve it, they know they can agree to disagree.
- People come from a place of curiosity rather than judgment.



TIP: It is especially important for volunteer agencies to educate their communities about the value they provide.



### Here are some benefits your department and community can realize by valuing each other:

**Increased safety of members and the community** because people are looking out for one another

**Potential volunteers seek out the department** because of its reputation for equity and inclusiveness

**Inclusive work and community environments** because all parties recognize and appreciate the benefits of treating each other fairly and respectfully

**High retention rate** because members recognize and own the contributions they make to the community's public safety

Improved communications, flow of information, and ability to collaborate on events and services because of collaborative partnerships

## **Implementation Tips**

This section provides suggestions about how to create a culture in which members value each other and their community. Please see **Appendix H** for a *Valuing Each Other and Our Community Checklist* and a list of ideas for connecting with your community.

- The department will be most successful in achieving its vision, mission, and strategic goals when its personnel value each other and the community. While members deliver essential services, the community provides the resources that enable them to do so, including volunteers.
- Be curious: search for what unites you instead of what divides you. Your discoveries will surprise you and enable you to see others in a very different light. You do not have to agree with or like everyone; however, you must respect the fact that they are human beings just like you.
- Update the Golden Rule: treat people as THEY want to be treated. Don't make assumptions about what others want or need. Ask questions, then listen carefully to their answers. Discover their interests rather than their positions. When people are from a culture that's different than yours, ask questions to learn more about it.
- Policies and procedures must support the department's values of inclusiveness and equity. Use inclusive language.

  Purchase bunker gear that fits women. To the extent possible, accommodate members' family, disability, and/or religious needs.
- Hold members accountable for watching out for their colleagues' physical and behavioral wellness in addition to their own. Adopt and practice the recommendations in the IAFC's "If you don't feel well, don't make it your farewell" campaign and in the VCOS Yellow Ribbon Report.

- Create a community of advocates for public safety by demonstrating clearly the value your department provides to the community. Communicate it widely in terms that resonate with your residents. "Connect the dots" between the department's vision and the activities and tasks you perform. Engage in a continuous education program by using a variety of events and media.
- Treat communication like the key to success that it is. At the beginning of all messages, answer the "What's in it for me?" question from stakeholders' perspectives. Put information in context so people can make sense of it; avoid data dumps. Focus on results; add methodology or activities only if necessary. Do not tell people everything you know; tell them what they need to know to make informed decisions. Do more listening than talking; you will learn a lot.
- Regularly evaluate the status of your department culture and of your relationship with your community. Relationships are challenging. They require constant nurturing, so take the time to cultivate new and existing ones. Immediately address issues as they arise. Ask for constructive feedback and consider it seriously. Get back to people about what you're going to do or not do and explain why. Build trust by ensuring the procedural fairness of your processes, programs, and systems.



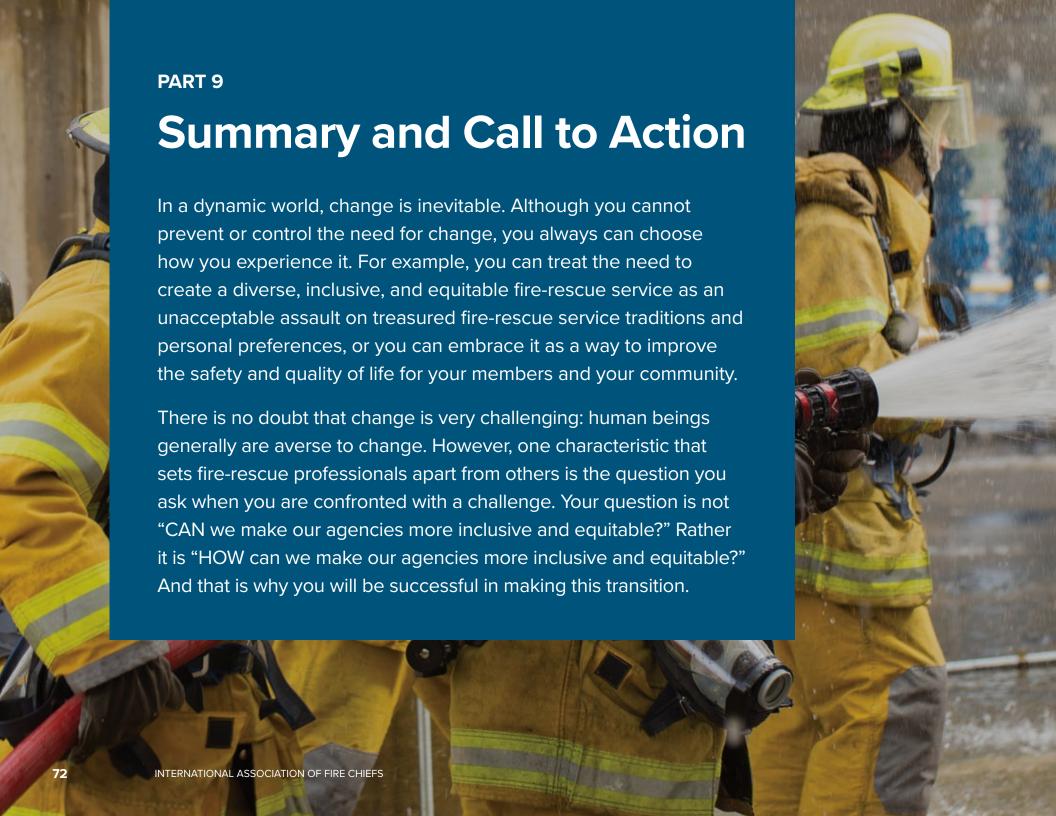


## This department's members value each other and their community

The local fire-rescue department has been able to maintain full staffing because its members understand that no individual or agency is an "island." Although the agency has a reputation of being a fun place to volunteer, its members recognize that it is a professional organization, not a club house or fraternity. Years ago they made a commitment to fostering an inclusive and equitable culture because they believed it would serve everyone well. In the station, members have a good time with each other, teasing and calling people out without crossing the line. They know that a simple "Thank you" goes a long way. When conflicts arise, a clear understanding of the department's core values enables them to work out their differences. There is a high level of situational awareness about their own – and their colleagues' physical and behavioral well-being. Members recognize that everyone is much better off when they take the time to forge strong bonds with their community. Residents constantly stop by the station to ask a question, share a family milestone, or just say hi. Members attend as many community events as possible. Their goal is to treat everyone as they (others) want to be treated. Thus they spend time getting to know residents all over town, especially those from different cultures. When people they help express their gratitude, instead of rejecting that expression of thanks by saying, "That's just our job," crew members listen respectfully and say simply, "You're welcome." Business owners appreciate the fact that members get to know them and become familiar with their operations. The result of their hard work is paying off, as the department is building a community of advocates for public safety that will serve everyone well.



**YOUR CHOICE:** Enable your department to thrive by creating a collaborative partnership with your community OR try to survive by keeping it at a distance.



# Here are some final suggestions to help get you started in making your members and communities safer and increasing the quality of their lives:

- Educate your members about the benefits of a diverse, inclusive, and equitable fire-rescue service.

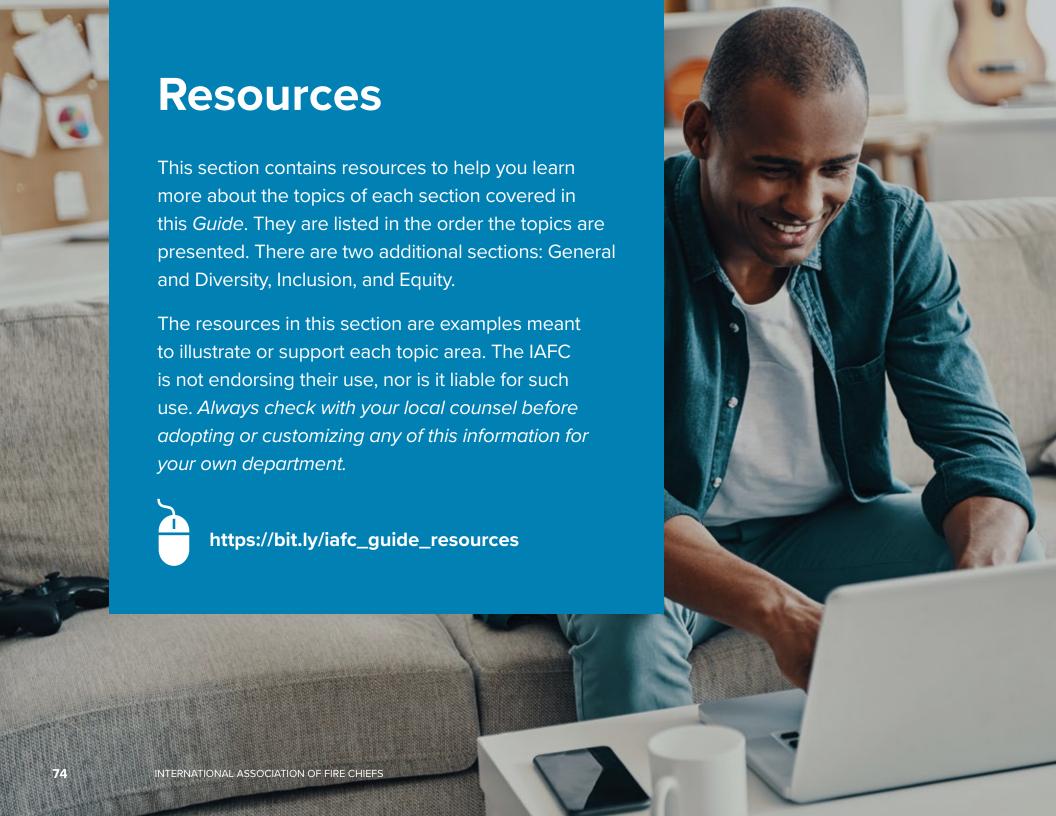
  Tell them specifically how it benefits them personally.
- **Educate your community**, especially the decision-makers, about the benefits of creating an inclusive, equitable environment.
- Involve as many internal and external stakeholders as possible throughout this change process. Though it will take longer than if the fire chief or a few people made decisions, the return on your investment will be their buy-in and their commitment to the department's success.
- You cannot over-communicate. Make sure your messages are consistent, accurate, timely, complete, and conveyed through a variety of appropriate media.

- Be prepared to manage the resistance to change.

  Be very honest: let people know that change is a challenging process that takes time and causes a great deal of discomfort. Things will seem to get worse before they get better. Stay the course.
- Co-create with your internal and external stakeholders a vision for the department that paints a compelling public safety big picture.

  Use that picture as your cornerstone for all decisions, and as a way to energize people when things are tough.
- Ask for help. There are people who have gone down the road you are about to embark upon, and they are very willing to share the lessons they have learned. Check out the resources listed in the next section.

What will you do today to help the fire-rescue service continue to live up to its reputation of always being there when people need them? **The choice, as always, is yours.** 



#### **GENERAL**

The State of the Volunteer Fire Service Report 2018

Oregon Fire Recruitment Network

Chief's A-RIT (Administrative Rapid Information Tool)

IAFC Volunteer and CombinationOfficers Section (VCOS) Ribbon Reports

#### **VISION, MISSION, VALUES**

Golden Fire Department Chief's Vision

Golden Fire Department Mission, Vision, Values

<u>Burtonsville Volunteer Fire Department</u> Mission, Vision, Values

<u>Cabin John Park Volunteer Fire</u> Department Mission, Vision and Values

#### STRATEGIC PLANNING

Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Strategic Plan

<u>Decatur Fire Rescue Strategic</u> Plan 2016-2019

IFSTA/FPP Initiative Implementation Guide

#### COMMUNICATION

How to Correspond with Membership

How to Use Microsoft Teams: End User Quick Guide

Fillable Marketing Materials for Volunteer Recruitment

Social Media Toolkit

Volunteer PSA Example: Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association

<u>Human Relations: Courageous</u> <u>Conversations</u>

#### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Hyattsville Volunteer Fire Department Uniform Policy

<u>Chicago Fire Department</u>
<u>Discrimination/Harassment</u>
Investigation Policy and Procedures

Sample Diversity and Inclusion Policy

<u>City of Calgary Diversity & Inclusion in</u> the Workplace Framework

**London Fire Brigade Diversity Policy** 

London Fire Brigade Inclusion Strategy

### Policies and Best Practices for Supporting Pregnant Members:

- City of Richmond Pregnancy Policy
- Chicago Fire Department Medical Procedure Order
- Chicago Fire Department Family and Medical Leave Policy
- Maternity Package Cover Letter
- Pregnancy, Maternity/Paternity Leave, and Lactation Policy



All resources can be found online at https://bit.ly/iafc\_guide\_resources

#### **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

# Sample Administrative Volunteer Position Descriptions & Template Documents:

- Ashburn Volunteer Fire Rescue
   Department Administrative Position
   Descriptions
- Loudoun County Fire-Rescue Receptionist Position Description
- <u>Loudoun County Fire-Rescue</u>
   <u>Warehouse Volunteer Position</u>
   Description
- Volunteer Position Description Template

#### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Creating a Diversity and Inclusion
Training Program

Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Goals & Training Evaluation

IAFC Academy (Free Registration) (Note: Register for the IAFC Academy before accessing these courses.)

#### Leadership Category:

- Mentoring I: Re-energizing Your Department Culture
- Mentoring II: Developing and Retaining Firefighters
- Volunteer Administrative Leadership

IAFC's Officer Development Program

<u>Organizational and Professional</u> Development in the Fire Service

National Fire Academy Professional Development Models

## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

How to Increase Membership Motivation

Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Facebook Page (Check photos and videos to see examples of how they recognize their members)

Motivation of Volunteer Firefighters in Combination Fire Departments

Golden Fire Department Volunteer Evaluation Form

Golden Fire Department Member and Employee Expectations

Golden Fire Department Command Expectations

Personal SWOT Analysis Worksheet

State of Oklahoma Performance Management Process

Oklahoma PMP Handbook



All resources can be found online at https://bit.ly/iafc\_guide\_resources

## VALUING EACH OTHER AND OUR COMMUNITY

Managing Conflict in Combination Fire Departments

Guidelines for Starting an Auxiliary from Fire Fighters Association of Missouri

Sample Auxiliary Member Description and Application from Rockville Volunteer Fire Department

Sample Spanish Immersion Program from Prince William County

Connecting with Your Local Underrepresented Communities

We Must Make A Change: Ending Harassment in the Fire Service

<u>Transgender Inclusion in the Workplace:</u>
A Toolkit for Employers

Firefighter Behavioral Health Alliance

Everyone Goes Home: Psychological Support

<u>IAFC's "If You Don't Feel Well, Don't</u> Make it Your Farewell" Toolkit

How to Increase Community Outreach

#### **DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY**

Women in Fire

<u>Does Your Department Need a</u> <u>Chief People Officer?</u>

Connecting with Your Local Underrepresented Communities

IAFC Academy (Free Registration) (Note: Register for the IAFC Academy before accessing these courses.)

#### Leadership Category:

- · Volunteer of the Future Series
- Bridging the Multigenerational Divide in Your Department
- It's Your Turn: Scenarios for Developing Inclusive Teams

Outreach for Inclusion: How to Engage Diverse Communities

Recruitment Efforts Aimed at Women

Can One Day Make a Firefighter?

Recruiting Women into the Fire Service

Webinar

Inclusive Language Guidance

Start the Conversation: Address
Unconscious Bias in the Fire Service

Harvard Implicit Bias Test

Making U.S. Fire Departments More Diverse and Inclusive

Real Deal Diversity & Inclusion:
A Quick Checklist

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue

Department Fire Chief's Equity and
Inclusion Council

U.S. Coast Guard Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan



All resources can be found online at https://bit.ly/iafc\_guide\_resources

# **Appendix**

Appendices A through H provide supplementary material for each of the eight topic areas in this *Guide*. Each appendix contains a sample checklist that contains specific actionable suggestions for how to incorporate diversity, inclusion, and equity as well as best practices into its associated topic area.

In addition to the checklists, three of the appendices contain other helpful documents:

**Appendix A** contains worksheets to help you create your vision, mission, and values statements as well as sample completed worksheets.

**Appendix B** includes a goal-setting worksheet and a goal implementation plan template.

**Appendix H** provides a list of ideas for how to demonstrate the value you place on each other and on your community.





## Vision, Mission, Values Checklist

We have written vision, mission, and values statements.	Together, our vision, mission, and values are the cornerstone	Our performance evaluation process assesses our adherence
Our agency's commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and equity is evident in our vision, mission, and values statements.	for making decisions and setting priorities.  We communicate our vision, mission, and values widely and	to the agency's core values.  Candidates for promotion, especially those for officer and supervisory level positions, are
Our personnel can recite our vision and mission statements and identify	often to our members and to our external stakeholders.	assessed on the extent to which their behaviors are consistent with our core values.
our core values.  People feel welcome because all our personnel exemplify our core values, off duty as well as on duty.	We define our values at the individual, work unit, and agency levels so everyone is clear about what they "look like."	All of our members can articulate clearly the value our agency provides the community because they see the connection between
Our vision presents a compelling picture of our community's safety and well-being that resonates with our stakeholders.	During our recruitment process we assess the alignment between our agency's values and those of prospective members.	the tasks and activities they perform and the agency's vision, mission, and value.
Our mission statement identifies the most important ways we achieve our vision.	We emphasize our vision, mission, and values during the academy and on-boarding process.	
Our core values represent who we are as an agency and describe how we conduct ourselves at and away from the fire station.	All of our processes are equitable, transparent, free of bias, and provide opportunities for input by those they affect.	



### Vision Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of this Guide, follow the directions below to develop your agency's vision statement.

**DIRECTIONS:** This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's vision statement. Use the suggested questions to brainstorm ideas with your team for discussion. After completing the rest of the worksheet, weave those ideas into your agency's mission statement and write it at the bottom.

WHY do you, as an organization, do what you do?

What impact do you want to have on the safety of your community and your members?

How will you communicate and demonstrate your commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and equity both in the community and throughout the agency?

Write your agency's vision statement here:

### SAMPLE

### Vision Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of this *Guide*, follow the directions below to develop your agency's vision statement.

DIRECTIONS: This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's vision statement. Use the suggested questions to brainstorm ideas with your team for discussion. After completing the rest of the worksheet, weave those ideas into your agency's mission statement and write it at the bottom.

#### WHY do you, as an organization, do what you do?

To save lives

To give back to our community

To keep our families safe

To help those in need

To be part of something bigger than ourselves

#### What impact do you want to have on the safety of your community and your members?

Be there to help people whatever their needs

Create a sense of security in the community that their fire department will be there when they need us

Increase the level of public safety in our community

Have each other's backs

Ensure that our members maintain a high level of behavioral health as well as physical fitness

How will you communicate and demonstrate your commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and equity both in the community and throughout the agency?

By serving all people without bias or judgment

By making our vision, mission, and values the cornerstones by which we make all decisions and take all actions

By respecting others even when we don't agree with or like them

By showing up prepared to help whenever we're called

#### Write your agency's vision statement here:

Create safe, healthy, economically viable, and inclusive environments for all people in our community as well as for all of our members.

## Mission Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of the *Guide*, follow the directions below to develop your agency's mission statement.

DIRECTIONS: This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's mission statement. Use the suggested questions to brainstorm ideas with your team for discussion. After completing the rest of the worksheet, weave those ideas into your agency's mission statement and write it at the bottom.

What are the primary responsibilities of your agency?

How do you fulfill those responsibilities? Through:

How will you communicate your commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and equity in fulfilling those responsibilities both in the community and throughout the agency?

Write your agency's mission statement here:

### SAMPLE

### Mission Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of the *Guide*, follow the directions below to develop your agency's mission statement.

DIRECTIONS: This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's mission statement. Use the suggested questions to brainstorm ideas with your team for discussion. After completing the rest of the worksheet, weave those ideas into your agency's mission statement and write it at the bottom.

#### What are the primary responsibilities of your agency?

Save lives

Protect property

Protect the environment

#### How do you fulfill those responsibilities? Through:

Fire suppression

Inspections

EMS services

Specialty services

Education

Inclusive work environment

How will you communicate your commitment to diversity, inclusiveness, and equity in fulfilling those responsibilities both in the community and throughout the agency?

Create an inclusive environment

Demonstrate professionalism both on and off duty

Demonstrate respect to every individual

Take responsibility for the physical and behavioral well-being of ourselves and our colleagues

Hold ourselves accountable to living our core values

#### Write your agency's mission statement here:

The mission of the Golden Fire Department's dedicated professionals is to enhance the quality of life for the Golden Community through fire and injury prevention, education, and the protection of life and property.\*

# Values Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of the *Guide*, follow the directions below to develop your agency's values statement.

**DIRECTIONS:** This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's values statement. Using the questions below, work with your team to list and define the values that express who you are as an agency. After completing the rest of the worksheet, write the results as your values statement.

What are the 4-6 core values that really define who you are as an agency?	How do you define each core value? Do NOT repeat the name of the value in the definition.

What are 2-3 examples of behaviors that demonstrate each core value as well as diversity, inclusiveness, and equity?	Write your agency
	-
	-

Write your agency's values statement here:

### SAMPLE

### Values Statement Worksheet

Keeping in mind the implementation tips on page 12 of the *Guide*, follow the directions below to develop your agency's values statement.

**DIRECTIONS:** This worksheet is a tool to help generate your agency's values statement. Using the questions below, work with your team to list and define the values that express who you are as an agency. After completing the rest of the worksheet, write the results as your values statement.

What are the 4-6 core values that really define who you are as an agency?	How do you define each core value? Do NOT repeat the name of the value in the definition.
Excellence	Setting high standards of performance for ourselves as individuals and as an agency, and meeting or exceeding them every day.
Inclusion	Making all people feel welcome and valued by treating them with respect and accepting that each individual has unique talents and characteristics
Life balance	Creating and maintaining a healthy, sustainable equilibrium among our obligations to our families and ourselves, our professional and/or educational responsibilities, and our duties as first responders.
Integrity	Upholding moral and ethical conduct at all times.
Professionalism	Demonstrating by our competence, appearance, reliability, demeanor, behaviors, and other qualities that our community can trust us with their health and safety.
Compassion	Serving all individuals with empathy and humanity.

## What are 2-3 examples of behaviors that demonstrate each core value as well as diversity, inclusiveness, and equity?

Our behaviors and words are aligned with our core values. We hold ourselves accountable for meeting or exceeding our stated performance standards and our community's expectations of our service.

We treat everyone the way they want to be treated. We welcome and value each person's contributions and talents. Our workplace is free of harassment, discrimination, bias, and retaliation.

We prioritize our time so we can meet our family, school, and work responsibilities and our department duties. We are accountable for our own physical and mental well-being and that of our colleagues.

We do the right thing, no matter what. We are accountable for our behavior at all times. We do what we say we will do.

We engage in continuous learning. We work as a team. We project a positive image through our actions, words, and appearance.

We address the emotional as well as the physical needs of the individuals we serve. We maintain situational awareness of others' perspectives. We refrain from judging others.

#### Write your agency's values statement here:

These value statements are from the Burtonsville (Maryland) Volunteer Fire Department.

#### WE VALUE:

- The lives and property that we are entrusted to protect throughout our community.
- Character, integrity, and honesty and require both personal and organizational accountability.
- Reliability, each Member's commitment to excellence in training and performance, and a passion for community service.
- Leadership, teamwork, communication, innovation, collaboration, and initiative.
- Diversity, are respectful, courteous, and inclusive of the talents and needs of all while focusing on the social good we do as an organization and as individuals.

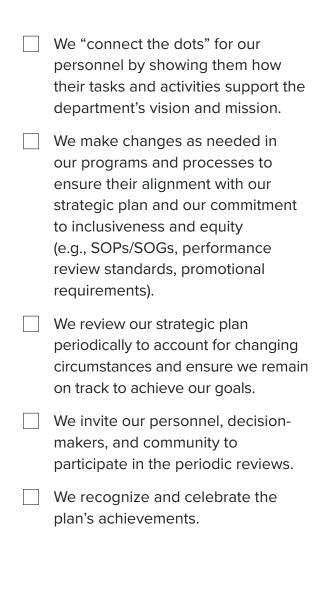


# Strategic Plan Development and Implementation Checklist

<ul><li>PLAN DEVELOPMENT</li><li>We have written vision, mission,</li></ul>	<ul> <li>We actively solicit participants' suggestions, treat them with respect, and consider them seriously.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Each goal, objective, and task has measures of progress (when applicable) and achievement.</li> </ul>
and values statements that are the foundation for our strategic plan.	<ul> <li>Stakeholders perceive our planning process as inclusive, equitable,</li> </ul>	We have designated a specific individual as the "advocate" for our
Our leaders and our governing body strongly support our strategic plan.	transparent, free of bias, and providing meaningful opportunities for them to participate.	strategic planning process who has overall responsibility for getting the plan written and implemented.
Our plan is aligned with the goals of the communities we serve.	Our communication plan ensures	Each goal and objective has a
Diversity, inclusion, and equity standards and expectations are	our planning-related messages are clear, consistent, easily understood	timeframe that is aligned with the timing of related objectives or tasks
woven clearly and specifically throughout our plan rather than	by our stakeholders, and readily accessible via multiple media.	<ul><li>We participate in meet and confer sessions with our labor group(s)</li></ul>
treated as "add-ons."	Our plan contains three to five	as needed.
We treat strategic planning and implementation as an ongoing, inclusive process.	realistic goals that support our vision and mission as well as those of our community.	<ul> <li>We provide sufficient time for participants to review their own and others' work and provide feedback.</li> </ul>
We invite our internal and external stakeholders to participate in	We develop SMART goals: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.	We share our draft plan with all of ou personnel before we make it public.
all phases of our strategic planning process.	Each goal is broken down into manageable objectives and tasks.	When we present our completed our plan formally to our governing body, we ask them to ratify it to signify their support.

	Like the ICS, our strategy implementation is scalable so we can move forward even with limited resources.
	We regularly and widely communicate our progress in implementing our plan.
	Our plan includes a process by which stakeholders can provide input throughout its implementation.
	Our leaders are prepared to address any change-related resistance that arises.
	Our officers lead by example by embracing change.
	We reinforce and recognize those who support the implementation process.
	We ensure that our personnel have or can acquire any new knowledge or skills required to implement the plan successfully.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT





TIP: People who participate in the strategic planning process have a vested interest in ensuring the agency's success.

### SMART Goal-setting Worksheet

STEP 1: Write your goal in as few words as possible.

Our goal is to:

STEP 2: Make your goal SPECIFIC by answering these questions:

Who will achieve it?

What will be the outcome?

When will we complete it?

Where will the goal be done?

How will we achieve it?

## STEP 3: Make your goal MEASURABLE by completing these statements:

We will measure progress by using these numbers or descriptions:

We will measure achievement by using these numbers or descriptions:

We will know we've achieved this goal when:

Our community will know we've achieved this goal when:

#### STEP 4: Make your goal ACHIEVABLE by addressing these issues:

Resources available (including time, skills, money, equipment):

Realism of the goal:

Realistic time frame:

#### STEP 5: Make your goal RELEVANT by answering these questions:

How does the goal support our vision or mission?

Why is achieving it important to our department?

What impact will achieving it have on our community?

## STEP 6: Make your goal TIME BOUND by identifying a deadline and milestones.

We will complete this goal no later than (date):

We will assess our progress on these dates (list them):

#### STEP 7: Write your final SMART goal.

Our goal is to:

### Goal Implementation Worksheet

#### GOAL:

Action Steps	Start Date	Person Responsible	Starting Measures	Budget	Notes	Final Measures	Completion Date
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							

Goals and action steps: list each goal and up to six action steps to complete it.

**Start date:** the date you begin each goal and action step.

**Person responsible:** name of the individual responsible for goal completion and for action steps.

Starting measures: key performance indicators, numbers, dollars, frequency for goals and steps.

**Budget:** budget for each goal and step.

Notes: as needed.

Final measures: indicators of goal and step achievement and dates achieved.

**Completion date:** proposed final date for each goal and step.



# Communication Checklist

Our agency has a written communication strategy that is supplemented by specific plans	<ul> <li>We provide important information in languages other than English based on our community's needs.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>We present information in contexts that others can understand easily and appreciate.</li> </ul>
for strategic initiatives and large projects.	If none of our personnel speak the language(s) common to many of	We use terminology familiar to the audience – no technical terms,
When meeting new people, we actively seek to discover ways in which we are similar.	our residents, we make standing arrangements for readily available or on-call translation services.	jargon, or acronyms.  We address difficult issues directly, candidly, and with compassion in a
We focus on our commonalities with our colleagues and our	We regularly check to ensure our audience understands our intended	timely manner.
community members.	meaning and we understand theirs.	We regularly invite others to provide constructive feedback.
We create and maintain a safe environment in which people feel free to express themselves and raise concerns.	<ul> <li>We engage in active listening by making appropriate eye contact, maintaining open body language, and indicating we have received</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>We share information as widely as possible and appropriate – no information hoarding.</li> </ul>
We treat others the way they want to be treated.	the message.  Our body language is consistent with our verbal messages.	We use inclusive language (e.g., firefighter vs. fireman, family vs. brotherhood, we vs. you).
We learn and honor people's preferences for receiving information (e.g., in person, phone, text).	We ask positive, open-ended questions that invite thoughtful	We make it easy for the public to contact and engage with us.
We ask what communication media people prefer and use them whenever possible.	discussion and generate creative options.	We maintain a respectful tone and demeanor even under trying circumstances.



# Policies and Procedures Checklist

Our policies and procedures define appropriate standards and address the needs of a diverse workforce.  Our SOPs/SOGs, processes, and systems are developed and	We encourage our personnel to make suggestions about how to improve our processes and policies by listening to their ideas, discussing their feasibility, and adopting them as appropriate.
implemented in an inclusive, equitable manner.	Our policies and procedures
We regularly review our SOPs/ SOGs as well as our processes and systems to ensure they support our	reinforce the fact that our agency is a professional organization, not club or fraternity.
personnel's success.	All personnel are held accountable
All personnel view our processes, systems, and decisions as	to the standards applicable to thei respective positions or roles.
procedurally fair: transparent, free of bias, non-discriminatory, and providing meaningful opportunities	Our policies and procedures cover all aspects of our agency, including personnel-related issues.
for input by those affected.	Our policies and procedures
We invite all personnel to provide input into creating or changing SOPs/SOGs, bylaws, and other	address processes such as performance review, training and development, and promotion.
processes and systems.	We have clear criteria for evaluating candidates for membership and promotion.

Candidates' performance history
is an important component of our promotional process.
We mitigate or eliminate single points of failure by training multiple people on processes.
We document our processes so that we do not rely only on one or a few people.



TIP: Equal requirements often result in inequitable outcomes.



## Job Descriptions Checklist

There is a job description for every position or role in the agency, including those that may not be	Our job descriptions focus on WHAT is to be done (outcomes or tasks) rather than on HOW they	We review our job descriptions to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on protected classes.
filled at the moment.  The agency's core values are evident in each job description.	must be done.  Each job description is accurate, complete, up to date, and reflects	The job descriptions form the bases for the performance evaluation process.
Each job description lists the most important functions and tasks of the job.	the true nature of the position or role.  All job descriptions include appropriate leadership components.	The criteria for promotion must be grounded in information in the job description for each position or role.
Each job description lists the minimum acceptable qualifications for its position or role.	Each job description identifies clearly to whom the person in the position or role reports.	All job descriptions are reviewed annually by the incumbents and their supervisors for accuracy,
Each job description complies with all relevant laws and regulations,	Information contained in the job descriptions is used when recruiting	completeness, and relevance; we make changes as necessary.
such as the Americans with Disabilities Act.	new members.  Applicants are considered qualified	We immediately revise job descriptions when positions or roles undergo significant changes.
We can demonstrate that all tasks or responsibilities identified as required for a position or role are job-related.	for a given position or role if they meet its requirements; they need not have skills that merely are preferred.	Our job descriptions are reviewed by someone with human resources
All our job descriptions distinguish clearly between tasks or	Our job descriptions allow us to distinguish between people who	(HR) expertise.

are qualified for the position or role

and those who are not.

responsibilities that are required to perform the role and those that

are preferred.



# Training and Development Checklist

All personnel have ongoing opportunities to attend relevant	Our training schedule is volunteer-friendly.	Beginning with our Academy and onboarding process, all our training
training and development programs.  We educate our members about implicit/unconscious bias.	Our personnel train together rather than being segregated by type or position.	and development programs are based on and address our vision, mission, and values.
All personnel undergo training that addresses diversity, inclusiveness, and equity and includes role plays.  We have a fair and consistent process	We strongly encourage all members to foster their personal or professional development each year by identifying and achieving at least one training or	We regularly review each training and development programs for relevance, completeness, equity, inclusiveness, and effectiveness, making changes as necessary.
for evaluating training requests.	development-related goal that takes them outside their comfort zone.	We have a formal mentoring
Our supervisory personnel obtain the training and development they need to be effective managers, especially in human resources-related areas.	Personnel who participate in programs outside the agency are required to share what they have learned.	when possible to provide professional development
We demonstrate that we value non-operational training and development as highly as we do operational training by removing obstacles for personnel to take	We conduct debriefs after every training to check for learning, to increase the likelihood that personnel will use the information,	opportunities.  We encourage all personnel to engage in continuous learning and professional development.
advantage of such opportunities.	and to solicit suggestions for improving the program.	We assign personnel projects that maximize their talents and/or teach
We ensure there are no obstacles to members' applying the knowledge or skills they learn when they are back on the job.	We ask personnel who are subject matter experts to conduct training in their area(s) of expertise regardless of their position or role.	them new skills or knowledge.



## Individual Development Plans and Performance Reviews Checklists

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS	plans include an appropriate	PERFORMANCE REVIEW
We have a written, clearly stated, and easily accessible career path document that covers all positions and roles in the agency.	leadership component.  Officers set an example of continuous improvement	Our performance review process enables our members to be fully successful in their positions or roles
We use this agency-level document to show personnel what career options are available and what they must do to prepare for each one.	by engaging in professional development.  Officers assign projects that maximize individuals' talents and provide opportunities for	We spell out the performance standards and expectations for each position and role clearly and communicate them prior to holding our personnel accountable for them
All personnel have a written individual career development plan with specific goals that they discuss and update with their supervisor annually during the performance review process.	their growth.  Personnel are invited and encouraged to suggest ways they can use their talents and skills within the agency.	We evaluate people based on the requirements of the position or role, as documented in the job description, as well as adherence to our mission, vision, and values.
Personnel are encouraged to incorporate their talents and skills in whatever positions or roles they hold.	Personnel have equal opportunities to prepare and apply for positions and roles throughout the agency.	<ul> <li>We evaluate our personnel based on the desired behaviors and designated results rather than on irrelevant characteristics or traits.</li> </ul>
Personnel who have no desire to promote focus on continuous improvement in their current position.	<ul> <li>Officers invite personnel to think about promoting, especially individuals who may not recognize their talents or full potential.</li> </ul>	Our personnel perceive the review process as transparent, free of bias, non-discriminatory, and providing opportunities for input.

	The results of their performance reviews do not come as a surprise to our personnel because their supervisors have provided	All personnel give and receive constructive feedback about behaviors and/or results that people can control and change or influence.		We have effective accountability mechanisms that ensure timely, accurate, and constructive feedback for all members.
	constructive feedback throughout the year.	Our leaders consistently demonstrate the behaviors they		Personnel discuss their individual career plans and goals during the
	We address performance-related	want others to emulate.		performance review process.
	problems immediately, before they can disrupt the work environment.	We provide training for those who evaluate performance to increase		Our performance review process enables us to distinguish between
	We employ a progressive approach	their objectivity and to enable them		good and poor performers.
	to addressing performance issues so people have a fair opportunity to improve their behavior.	to engage effectively in difficult conversations when necessary.		Periodically we evaluate the effectiveness of our performance
		Performance review results are an		review process and make changes
	For everyone's safety, we enforce	integral part of our promotional and		as necessary.
	performance standards consistently and fairly across the board.	advancement process.		Our evaluators provide truthful and realistic feedback when advising
		Probationary personnel receive		
	Performance reviews focus	frequent constructive feedback and		members what they must do to
	on behaviors in both technical	regular, behaviorally-based reviews		be successful.
	and non-technical areas (e.g.,	of their technical and non-technical		
	leadership, professionalism).	skills and competencies.		



# Valuing Each Other and Our Community Checklist

Our vision, mission, and values statements and our strategic goals convey our commitment to creating	We watch out for each other's physical, emotional, and behavioral well-being.		We treat everyone fairly, providing our members with the same opportunities and delivering the	
and maintaining a diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.		Our personnel have input into decisions that affect them.		same level of service, care, and attention to all community members.
We define "diversity" very broadly.		We remove obstacles to inclusion		We connect easily and effectively with all community groups.
We make everyone feel welcome.		by periodically reviewing relevant		, 3
We discover and focus on what we have in common.		documents and processes and changing them as needed.		We invite our community into our fire house.
		☐ We create safe forums for people		We seek personnel who are bilingual.
We treat others the way they want to be treated.		to discuss and ask questions about diversity-related issues.		We invite community members to
We embrace people for who they are, accepting rather than merely		We maintain a presence in the		share their cultures and traditions with us.
tolerating them.		community, participating in events and attending meetings.		The education of our stakeholders
We welcome those with skills and interests in roles other than		We host events that bring us together.		is a high priority.
firefighting and EMS.		as together.		
We celebrate our rich diversity.		We find opportunities express our thanks.	-	TIP: Presuming others' good intent sets the stage
We approach new ideas, people,				for positive interactions.

## Ideas for valuing each other and the community

## CONNECTING WITH AND APPRECIATING EACH OTHER

- Get to know others personally: their interests, passion, talents, goals, hobbies
- Discover and focus on your commonalities
- Ensure leaders know their members personally and use their names when possible
- "Thank you" and "good job" are simple, appreciated, and costfree ways to recognize others' efforts and outcomes
- Invest in your people
- Create an inclusive culture in which everyone feels welcome
- Have members at all ranks play a part in all committees and efforts
- Enable everyone to participate in the decision-making process

## CONNECTING WITH AND APPRECIATING OUR COMMUNITY

- Adopt an elementary school; detail members to specific schools
- Hold a "Touch a Truck" event
- Participate in "firefighters read to class" days
- Hold a chili cookoff
- · Post your outreach calendar online
- Invite the community to open houses at the station
- Open the station to birthday parties
- Conduct a Community Academy
- Offer Scouts lock-in events
- Put on a girls' or kids' camp
- Teach CPR
- Auction off dinner at the fire house auction
- · Conduct checks at senior centers

- Participate in or sponsor career fairs
- Hold a public safety night out that includes Q&A sessions
- Offer "Coffee with a Chief" opportunities

