

VOLUNTEER CRITICALITY SUMMIT NOTES

SOUTHERN GROUP

HURDLES

- Applicants drop during process, or early on, due to requirements
- We (fire service) make it difficult on the volunteers
- The impression that state training systems put an emphasis on career departments
- ISO is an issue
 - How do we get them to relax some of their burdens
 - ISO 240hrs Career do volunteers meet this same number
- Everyone wants to feel appreciated
- Higher percentage of medical calls than fire/other
- Voting members in and/or out leads to lack of professionalism
- We continue to do things because we have always done them that way. Very archaic
- Clashing between career & volunteer
- Bridging the gap between paid and volunteer
- The challenges of the reality in application of standards (training) must be different for volunteer vs career

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

- Different/multiple ways of delivering training to meet the time constraint and availability needs
- Make new members feel welcome
- Family orientation - a key to getting better retention and recruitment
- SCSFA - marketing for VFF recruitment
- Market volunteer firefighter better, do better telling story
- Does your department look like the community they live in. Is it inviting
- Marketing/recruiting materials in other languages if your community has other language(s) represented
- Develop a diversity committee outside of the department
- Think outside the box:
 - Stand outside stores to recruit / grassroots efforts
 - Statewide recruitment effort – **DONE 2018 / reintroduce**
<https://www.scvolunteerfire.org/>
- Do we need IFSAC+Pro Board for volunteer services or does it just make requirements tougher

ACTION ITEMS

- Have colleges play FD recruitment videos at sporting events
- Outside organization to process new applicants
- Host training, discussion sessions with OSHA and its application to volunteer systems
- Creating media to reach middle school level and up
- Must get into middle schools

NORTHERN GROUP

HURDLES

- Competing with family, fulltime job, kids, church, recreation
- Competing with technology
- Inflation/fuel costs
- Struggles with pride/ownership and sense of community
- Changing cultures in fire service
- Retaining firefighters / turnover costs

OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE

- DEI recruitment
- Eliminate “stigma” of volunteer
- Paid v. volunteer (treat equally)
- Giving back to community (country/county)
- Mentor programs

ACTION ITEMS

- Offer live-in programs to college students
 - People who are moving out and have jobs (first job)
- Engage private companies we work for to support volunteerism
- Research and develop strategies to institute college tuition reimbursement or reduction for volunteers
- Ask business/company to display recruitment info throughout location(s)
- Recruiting by attending civic groups and neighborhood watch programs/events
- Recruiting military at end of service