



# Minnesota State Volunteer Firefighters Association Inc.

---

## MSVFA

13728 Danbury Path Rosemount, MN 55068

Phone: 612-598-6369

Fax: (952) 953-2515

Email: [msvfasec@msvfa.org](mailto:msvfasec@msvfa.org)

Website: [www.msvfa.org](http://www.msvfa.org)

---

## Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER)

### MSVFA Study Plan for Recruitment & Retention

Award Amount \$491,000

Award Period May 27, 2009 to May 26, 2013

**The MSVFA's plan is to use this grant project to gather and analyze data, create educational and marketing tools to be distributed to all fire departments with education for improved marketing of the fire department to the community to successfully recruit and retain firefighters. This project will enhance our ability to attain minimum NFPA 1720 24 hour staffing, thus assuring that the volunteer fire departments will have adequate protection for fire and all hazards related incidents.**

We will be using qualitative and quantitative methodologies, for our research by conducting a literature review, survey senior-level fire officials in 87 counties across our state and volunteer fire chiefs in rural Minnesota, and survey Minnesota volunteer firefighters.

This assessment will also interview likely firefighter candidates in communities across Minnesota. To date we believe this will be the first time anyone has interviewed the public as why they are not volunteering in their community.

We know that recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters is a national problem and not unique to rural Minnesota. After analyzing the researched results, we anticipate that the results will indicate that volunteer firefighters are more likely to join their local fire company because of their commitment to community and because of their families' connection to the fire company.

We anticipate that the results will indicate that financial benefits may play only a small role in motivating people to volunteer and remain active. The problem is that we really don't know and we desperately need to find out so we can put a successful plan in place.

The goal of our SAFER application is to enhance the 781 local fire departments abilities to comply with staffing, response, and operational standards established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1720 and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

This grant will allow us to provide support to communities statewide so they can continue to provide this critical volunteer service to their community. Additionally, the success of this program would be shared as a model for other fire departments throughout the country.

# Minnesota State Volunteer Firefighters Association Inc.

## MSVFA Plan Time Line

### Phase I – Preparation for implementation

- MSVFA Board establishes process and performance outcomes based on the SAFER Award.
  - Process
    - Review findings of national studies on Recruitment and Retention.
    - Create and finalize questionnaire and surveys instruments.
    - Conduct a Staffing Needs Assessment for each of Minnesota's 781 fire departments in regards to their recruitment and retention status.
    - Develop Recruitment Tool Kits for Volunteer Firefighters
    - Develop Retention Tool Kits for Volunteer Firefighters
  - Outcomes
    - We will produce a document that reflects an annual evaluation of our progress.
      - This document will be shared with the local state and national organizations.
    - Impact objectives of this program are programmed for review twice a year.
      - Retention surveys of the department members will evaluate issues regarding the members' desire to stay on the department.
      - Specific details will be gathered from the civilian population as to why they are not volunteering.
    - Increasing statewide recruitment by 20% in the next three years from the current level is the first goal.
    - The creation of a state wide annual recognition program to recognize eight volunteer firefighters.
- Review findings of national studies on Recruitment and Retention.
- Finalize surveys instruments.
  - Questionnaire and website survey
  - Seek input from supporting partners on subject matter they may want incorporated into questionnaire and survey
- Develop and finalize marketing and communication strategies
  - DPS, SFM, LMNC, MCFCA, MSFDA and MSVFA publications
- Develop and finalize website for online data collection
  - MSVFA website

### Phase II – Data Needs Analysis

- Train Regional staff on presentation materials and survey instruments.
- Confirm schedules and events
  - Regional fire department meetings
  - MSFCA Conference
  - State Fire Schools
  - MSFDA Conference
- Coordinate the delivery of field assessments statewide

# Minnesota State Volunteer Firefighters Association Inc.

## **Phase III – Data Creation and Conversion**

- Coordinate the collection of field data
  - Conduct a Staffing Needs Assessment for each of Minnesota's 781 fire departments in regards to their recruitment and retention status.
    - Contact each FD on their current and needed staffing
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup> years will be to update the findings and data from the first year.

## **Phase IV – Creation of Retention Tools**

- Develop Retention Tool Kits for Volunteer Firefighters
  - This material will be distributed to all fire departments and cities and towns in Minnesota.

## **Phase V – Creation of Recruitment Tools**

- Develop Recruitment Tool Kits for Volunteer Firefighters
  - This material will be distributed to all fire departments and cities and towns in Minnesota.

## **Phase VI – Public Kick Off for recruitment**

- Finalize Media Plan and Implement Statewide

## **Phase VII – Program evaluation and future planning**

- Analyze the results of Phase VI
  - We will produce a document that reflects an annual evaluation of our progress. This document will be shared with the local state and national organizations.
  - Impact objectives of this program are programmed for review twice a year.
  - Retention surveys of the department members will evaluate issues regarding the members' desire to stay on the department.
  - Specific details will be gathered from the civilian population as to why they are not volunteering.
- The creation of a state wide annual recognition program to recognize eight volunteer firefighters.
  - \$12,000 to create and utilize a statewide volunteer firefighter recognition program to help recruit and retain volunteers.
  - One award will be made to a volunteer firefighter in each of the 8 regions.
  - This project will include marketing materials and development of the program.