



Request for Proposal: Volunteer Recruitment

Bid Release Date: November 1, 2017

Bid requested by:
Chester County Fire Chiefs Association
PO Box 744
Downingtown, PA 19335

1. Brief Project Overview

Since 1980 the number of volunteer first responders has been dwindling at a steady rate. Working with the leaders of the volunteer first responder associations in Chester County, we have come together to reach specific target audiences.

Within Chester County, our greatest deficiency and vulnerability is attracting younger demographics. At the time of this application, just 21% of our volunteers were less than 25 years of age. Our veteran firefighters are getting older and there are far less young volunteers joining the ranks.

In August 2017, The Chester County Fire Chief's Association was awarded a SAFER grant for \$381,000 in an effort to boost the volunteer first responder numbers in Chester County.

2. Background Information

The Chester County Fire Chiefs Association, serving as the host of this grant, is the advisory body to 41 separate volunteer fire departments located in our county. Within the county, there are no fully-career departments, and many communities rely solely upon the dedication of volunteers. Of the 41 departments, only 16 are considered combination with either full or part-time staffing.

The official population of Chester County the 2010 census was 498,886; less than 1% of those residents currently serve as volunteer first responders today. The most recent population estimate of the county is now more than 515,000, representing a 185% increase since the early 1970's. In the same timeframe, Pennsylvania as a whole has seen an 86% decrease in the number of firefighters throughout the state, according to the State Fire Commissioner.

In 1992, there were 1,831 volunteer firefighters serving in Chester County when we had a population of 386,337. In 1997, that number dropped to 1,664 firefighters while the population increased to 414,440. Further statistics show the continuing downward trend.

In a report released by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania, state fire officials agreed that volunteer firefighters spent most of their time involved with fundraising instead of training. If more financial resources were available for volunteer fire companies, recruiting and retention efforts would be more successful.

Officials' also strongly emphasized that firefighters, not apparatus and equipment, are the most important assets of the volunteer fire service. Our identified deficiencies have obvious consequences of providing adequate fire protection to our communities, and pose additional risks to firefighters due to limited staffing concerns.

3. Project Goals & Target Audience

Our grant award is specifically based upon using a marketing program which will target our communities who are suffering from the largest decline in volunteers with an effort to boost membership and attract new volunteers.

Our specific program areas to be addressed:

- Social media content and advertising (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- Billboard advertisements (Electronic and roving)
- Recruitment presentations (Schools, public events, etc.)
- Movie theater advertising (A study shows movie theater ads trigger a 74% response)

Without fresh blood, our currently overworked volunteers will continue to suffer burnout and our rosters will continue to decrease. With the targeted recruitment of younger members, we aim to recruit those with a strong potential for longevity. There is no greater, longer-running expression of volunteerism in United States history than the volunteer fire service, which still saves taxpayers billions of dollars each year. According to NFPA statistics, almost three-fourths of the nation's 1.1 million firefighters are volunteers, and two-thirds of all fire departments are volunteer.

4. Scope of Project

The following is a breakdown of the areas that the grant is to be used for. Understanding different philosophies, we have to move forward with this initial list, unless we can demonstrate that it is not a feasible path.

- Social Media Content and Advertising (\$12,000/year = \$36,000)
- Movie Theater Advertising (\$16,000/year = \$48,000)
- Production Costs (1 time expense = \$5,000)
- Billboard/Mobile Advertising (\$42,000/year = \$126,000)
- Direct Mailer Campaign (\$44,000/year = \$132,000)
- Per Diem Grant Administrator (\$2,500/year = \$7,500)
- Recruitment Banners (1 time expense = \$3,500)
- Recruitment Pamphlet Production (1 time expense = \$20,000)
- Recruitment Presentations Stipends (\$6,000/year = \$18,000)
- Presentation Travel Reimbursement (\$1,000/year = \$3,000)

The total amount of the grant is \$381,000 awarded to the Association over three (3) years. The anticipated starting date is January 2018.

5. Timeline

Bidders are invited to furnish the items listed herein in accordance with the terms and conditions attached. The RFP will be available November 1, 2017. Sealed bids must be received no later than November 30, 2017. Successful bidders will be notified within 45 days of approval of bid. Unsigned bids will be rejected.

Bids should be returned to:

Chester County Fire Chiefs Association
Attn: SAFER Grant Bid
PO Box 744
Downingtown, PA 19335

There will be a pre-bid meeting on November 6, 2017 at 7:00 PM held at the Chester County Public Safety Training Campus, 137 Modena Road, Coatesville, PA 19320.

This will be the time for any interested parties to ask question and to meet the committee participants.

6. Principal Point of Contact

Mike King, Chairman, Recruitment & Retention, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association

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610-568-2688

Neil D. Vaughn, President, Chester County Fire Chiefs Association

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484-639-3060

11/8/2017

Addendum 1

Add:

3. Project Goals & Target Audience

Program areas to be addressed to also include:

- Direct Mailer

Remove:

4. Scope of Project:

- Recruitment Banners (1 time expense = \$3,500)
- Recruitment Presentations Stipends (\$6,000/year = \$18,000)