

Recruitment & Retention



Recap Message

Wow! 2022 went by fast. We are happy to announce that 30 candidates successfully passed CPAT in June (3 being female) and 86 more passed in September (5 being female). As of December 1st the total number of **Firefighters** in N.H. was **5,960** with about 63% of them being certified, and the total number of **EMS providers** was **5,781**. We look forward to seeing those numbers increase soon.

Statewide Staffing Vacancies

In July an inquiry was made to all Fire Departments and EMS units asking for their vacancy and openings to conduct a needs assessment. Only one-third of individuals contacted responded. The results indicated that N.H. needs at least **346 Firefighters and 110 EMS providers**. A new request for updated info is coming soon. Please! Please! Respond to it. Your cooperation is greatly needed.

Something to Ponder Wage Info

The N.H. Employment Security, Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau's Occupational Employment & Wages Report for 2022, gives the **average hourly wage** for **employed Firefighters** as \$27.26, EMTs (not fire) as \$17.95 & Paramedics (not fire) as \$26.49. Volunteer stipends are not reflected in the wage report and vary by department.



Register at <https://nhfa-ems.com/scheduled-courses/>

IMPORTANT DATES

- ❖ 01/11 - Marketing for Fire & EMS @ Milford Ambulance (*recruitment*)
- ❖ 01/24- LOSAP for Volunteer Fire Depts. @ Bethlehem training facility (*retention*)
- ❖ 02/09 - Anti-bullying & Bridging the Generational Gap @ FSTEMS (*retention*)
- ❖ 02/24 - How to recruit U.S. Veterans for Fire & EMS @ FSTEMS (*recruitment*)
- ❖ 02/25 - CPAT practice for women @ FSTEMS
- ❖ 03/11 - NVFC R&R 8-hour workshop @ FSTEMS

New Member Snapshot

On September 7, 2022, Cylan "C.J." Gosselin started his career as a Firefighter/EMT with Claremont Fire Department. C.J. was born and raised in Claremont and served 5 years in the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg before returning to his hometown. The cultural similarities between the military and the fire service such as dedication, chain of command structure, and not knowing what to expect on a day-to-day basis are what attracted C.J. to join the fire service. When he saw there was an opening for a Firefighter on Claremont's Facebook page he immediately applied. In his spare time C.J. coaches varsity track & field at Stevens High School and plays in a competitive flag football league. Welcome C.J.!

This demonstrates the importance of using social media as a recruitment tool.



RECRUITMENT & RETENTION COORDINATOR

ACTIVITIES

- Contacted all Fire and EMS organizations to conduct a needs assessment.
- Attended IAFC's R&R Coordinator Certification Course in October at Bangor, ME.
- Scheduled several R&R trainings and other related events.
- Emailed all N.H. high school counselors with career information and asked that they encourage students to consider Fire and EMS careers and volunteer opportunities.
- Visited multiple Fire departments and EMS organizations around the State for ride time and meet & greets at Laconia, Loudon, Stewart's Ambulance, East Kingston, AMR, Nashua, Allenstown, Milford Ambulance, and Claremont.
- Forwarded several helpful R&R links including job fair info to all Fire and EMS leaders.
- Met with Professional Fire Fighters of New Hampshire (PFFNH) to discuss the possibility of hosting a 1-day in-person R&R workshop to cover topics such as social media, teamwork, and generational differences.
- Coordinated a date for the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) to host an R&R workshop in Concord.



The Recruitment & Retention Coordinator is committed to helping all Fire and EMS leaders get the tools they need to succeed in their recruitment and retention efforts.



There was a great turnout in December at the lecture on Preventing Harassment and Discrimination for Fire & EMS. Thank you all for coming!

A Not-So New Member

Paramedic Rodney Dunn of Milford Ambulance always enjoyed helping others for as long as he can remember. Rodney attributes his appeal to prehospital medicine to his father, a police officer, and watching TV shows like *Emergency!* and *Rescue 911* as a child. In 1988, Rodney volunteered for Merrimack Ambulance and graduated NHTI's paramedic program in 1992. From 2011 through 2018 Rodney was a paramedic and field operations manager at Armstrong Ambulance in Arlington, MA. Then in 2018 he was hired at Milford Ambulance and has been there ever since. Milford Ambulance's frequent trainings, great equipment, and pleasant work environment are just a few reasons why Rodney said he enjoys being employed there as a paramedic. Rodney is an enthusiast for modern designer board games. Way to go Rodney!

An easy way to retain your staff is to take pride in how your workplace looks.



A WORK IN PROGRESS

CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

- Getting recently created Firefighter and EMS provider career roadmaps translated into several foreign languages in an attempt to attract a more diverse workforce and to widen the talent pool.
- Restarting the CPAT for women practice days in 2023 to educate and encourage women to achieve their goal in passing the test.
- Creating templates for all Fire and EMS units to be able to use.
- Developing a mentor training program.
- Create an EMS workforce survey.
- Continue to coordinate R&R events.
- In discussions with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) to hold their 2-day RRC certification program at FSTEMS in October.
- Constructing a statewide marketing campaign.
- Hopes to visit all of N.H.'s Fire Departments and EMS organizations.



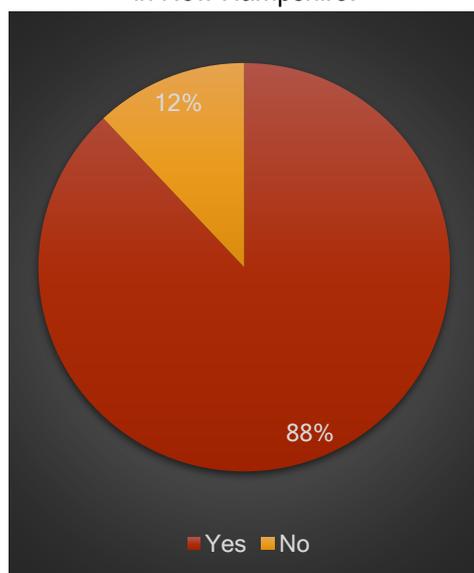
The N.H. National Guard has agreed to disseminate Fire and EMS opportunity information to its active members. It is our hope that this will help attract more self-sacrificing, adaptable, and compassionate team players to consider joining the Fire and EMS workforce.

WHAT COULD BE THE CAUSE OF FEWER FIRST RESPONDERS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?

THE SURVEY SAYS

In September a confidential survey was sent to all Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) attendees during the timeframe of **2020 through 2022**. The survey asked questions relating to recruitment and retention. The answers were surprising.

When asked if they are currently working as a Firefighter or EMS provider in New Hampshire.



Top reasons why they are not working as a first responder in New Hampshire.



Fifty percent (50%) of survey participants indicated that they learned of job openings via **social media**, while the other 50% said they heard by **word of mouth**.

Here are some **motivating factors** the survey takers said keep them interested in being first responders:

“To help people in need. To master lifesaving skills because it is exciting.”

“The skills learned, schedule and team environment.”

“Public service, emergency medicine, and camaraderie.”

When Survey participants were asked what, if anything, has caused them to **lose interest** in being a first responder the answers were disappointing. Here are some honest answers given:

“The education requirements are difficult to achieve while working full time.”

“Bureaucracy, red tape, slow to change.”

“Under compensated – low morale.”

Recruitment Success

Chief Dana Cullen, Jr. of Center Ossipee Fire Rescue has been very proactive at recruiting. His primarily part-time department has 3 part-time employees, 9 per diems and 20 call members that cover 24/7 shifts to ensure his community receives the resources it needs. Chief Cullen has **sent flyers to high school** and uses the traditional method of **word of mouth within professional circles**. Having a commitment to training has also been a huge draw for the younger crowd. He has recruited 5 people of different age groups with 2 of them bringing with them previous experience and certifications from other states such as MA and NY. Chief Cullen treats recruiting as a top priority and it shows.



L to R: Mike Hunter, Dan Karl and David Doyle. Not pictured are Mike Wilcox and Kobie Lees.

More Recruitment News

Exeter Fire Department has had an outstanding year with recruitment. The full-time career department managed to hire 7 new members for the position of Firefighter/EMT with 3 of them being Paramedics, 2 AEMTs, and 2 EMTs. How did they do it? Exeter decided to use a modern approach by selling themselves to potential hires by **inviting prospects to the station** for an informal tour which allows shifts to assess the individuals as a person without the pressure of oral boards. They are still selective of who they hire and candidates are able to get a feel for what to expect. Exeter posts jobs on social media, NHFA website, and by word of mouth. **Innovative thinking makes for promising results.**



L to R: Weston Bartlett, Kylee Haas, Cody Bilodeau, Chris Hamel, John Lebel, and Nick Colanna. Not pictured is Bill Page.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can calculate your employee retention rate using this formula:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Retention Rate} &= \frac{\text{No. of Employees who Stayed for the Whole Time Period}}{\text{No. of employees at the start of the time period}} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{14}{15} \times 100 \\ &= 93\% \end{aligned}$$

The benchmark is 90%

Retention Success

Chief Al Poulin of Barnstead Fire Rescue has been successful in retaining his employees since he became Chief in 2021. Barnstead has 6 full-time Firefighters and 1 Paramedic which represent diversity in gender and age. Full-time staff range in age from 21 to 56 years old with some members having up to 23 years in the retirement system. Chief Poulin attributes his department's retention to a number of things such as the close proximity to many employees' homes, a 24-hour **work schedule**, and **well-kept apparatus and a clean firehouse**. Undoubtedly, Chief Poulin's leadership experience plays a huge role in his department's success.



More Retention News

Stewart's Ambulance has 325 employees throughout New Hampshire consisting of both full-time and part-time staff, 40% of which are female and represent all ethnicities collectively. But what is really remarkable about Stewart's is their success with retention. Their top 5 members average 22.6 years and their longest tenured employee has been with them for 32 years. Perhaps what their staff finds appealing are the **competitive wages**, **full benefits**, **accommodating work schedule options**, and **comfortable living quarters**. Either way, it is evident that Stewart's Ambulance strives to make its employees happy and their hard work has paid off.



Top L: Mark Stearns and Tom Russell Top R: David Mack (32 years)
Bottom L: Bob Bousquet and Alex Sousa Bottom R: John Burdette

The North Country's First Recruitment & Retention Event

A huge thank you to Jackson FD, Gorham FD, Littleton Fire-Rescue, Twin Mountain FD, Whitefield FD, and St. Johnsbury FD for attending Marketing for Fire & EMS Organizations at our North Country facility in December.



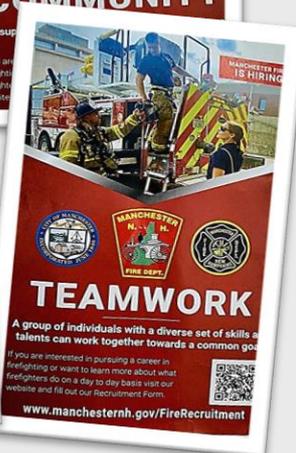
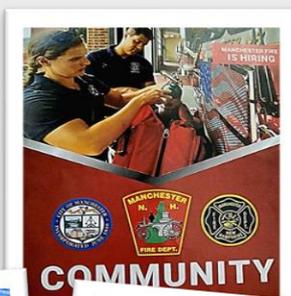
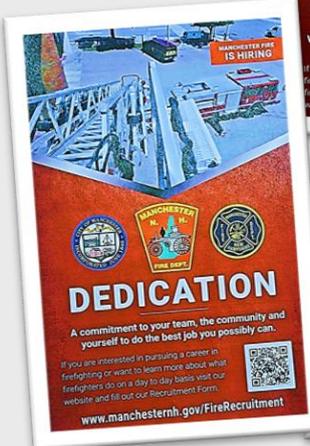
Laying the Groundwork

DON'T FORGET

Contact your local high school and ask to be invited to career days.

- Send your younger members to represent your organization.
- Have flyers and demos ready to showcase.
- Offer a personal tour of your workplace.
- Build connections and leave a positive impression.

Manchester Fire Dept. is prepared for upcoming career fairs



Jackson Fire Dept. is sharing engaging graphics on social media to attract new members

Remember When?

Helpful Resources:



Enhancing Employee Retention in Public Safety Agencies- Lexipol



Free NAEMT Recruitment Guide for EMS Agencies





Raising the Bar

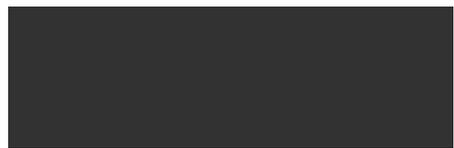
Loudon Fire Department has shined this year with recruitment. The combination department has managed to hire 10 new members to fill both Fire and EMS positions. Chief Tom Blanchette recruited 4 new young women, 3 young men, and 3 men over the age of 35. Many are probably wondering how he did it. Chief Blanchette understands the importance of **connecting to high schools** in his surrounding area and **offers ride time** to the students of Concord Regional Technical Center's Emergency Services program. He also stays engaged with LRCC's Fire Science student live-in program to keep the flow of young people in the door. Chief Blanchette is committed to having a **welcoming and accepting environment** and works hard to make sure that events and trainings include everyone and **no one is left behind**. Loudon Fire Department uses social media and relies on word of mouth to recruit new members. According to Chief Blanchette, Loudon's **younger members have become some of his best recruiters**. He also does not reject potential members who want to join later in life. He is finding that people with less parenting responsibilities are wanting to join.

Keep up the great work!



The new recruits were sworn in at the most recent awards and recognition dinner.
 L to R: Jacob Shapiro, Peter Godbout, Nathan Eckers, Hannah Barton, Sean Marden, Ethan Lavoie, Maddison Hebert, Hayden Gardner, Brady Leonard, and Sara Frenette

Manchester Fire Department is using a **modern and effective** way of capturing the attention of potential candidates.



In Case You Haven't Heard

\$2,535,030 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds were approved for the New Hampshire Emergency Medical Technician Training Program.

This program will assist in **recruiting**, training, and **retaining** EMS providers, and assist licensed New Hampshire EMS Units in the delivery of emergency, non-emergency transportation and emergency response services to the people of New Hampshire.

FSTEMS will be working with New Hampshire Employment Security on developing the specifics of this program and will announce those details as soon as they are available.



FSTEMS Instructor Spotlight

Robert Buckley started his employment with N.H. Fire Standards and Training and EMS as a Program Tech Support Assistant or "O51" then became a Fire Instructor in April 2022 at the Ray Burton Training Facility in Bethlehem. Instructor Buckley is also full-time at Campton-Thornton Fire Rescue. His hard work and dedication to the fire service has not gone unnoticed.

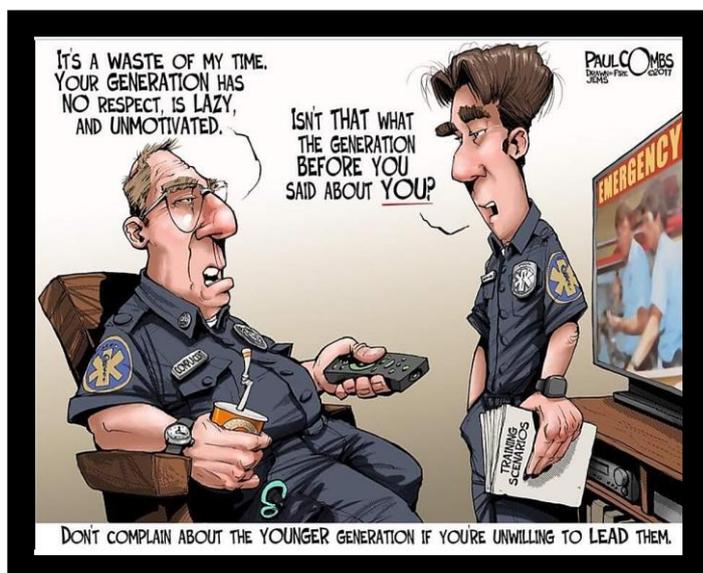
FSTEMS is proud to have Robert Buckley as an instructor.



ONE LAST THING

QUESTIONS FOR READERS

- 1) Are there any particular presentations you would like for FSTEMS to **host** with respect to Recruitment & Retention?
- 2) Did you **remember** to assign a **Primary Job Role** for each of your department's staff member when you completed the new Annual Fire Dept. Roster in RespondNH? That info will provide more meaningful data for Recruitment & Retention reports.



"A bad boss can take good staff and destroy it, causing the best employees to flee and the remainder to lose all motivation!"

-Peter Drucker

A huge thank you to **Hillsboro** for the patch, to **AMR** for the two challenge coins, and to **Ctr. Ossipee** for t-shirts, stickers, and patches. I hope to collect more merch in 2023.

Your support means a lot!

Have any fantastic news to share?

If you have a recent success story with recruitment or retention and would like to have it shared in a future newsletter please email Kimberly.M.McCulloch@dos.nh.gov.