

# Outreach and Recruitment Plan

2015



## Rockford Fire Department

The Rockford Fire Department is an Equal Opportunity  
Employer

## **Letter from the Fire Chief**

The Rockford Fire Department has had a long history of helping the citizens of and the visitors to the City of Rockford. Since 1881, when the department forged its roots, the men and women of the Rockford Fire Department have stood by ready to help in any way possible.

In 2013, we have made an organization wide goal to increase the number of qualified applicants to join the ranks of our department, the department of the citizens. To assist and help guide our efforts, this Recruitment Plan was developed. As we move forward, we will use this document as our strategy to form a qualified, inclusive, and diverse workforce, one that is uniquely suited to address the challenges we face daily.

The Rockford Fire Department, like many departments across this Country, prides itself in teamwork, honesty, and integrity. To join the department takes determination, motivation, and a sense of higher purpose.

I am confident that through this plan, the assistance of all our personnel, and all of our recruiting efforts, we will be successful in developing the new leaders of our department.

I wish all applicants to our great department the best of luck and support the activities of everyone involved in our recruiting process as outlined in this plan.

Sincerely,

Chief Derek Bergsten

## **Introduction**

The Rockford Fire Department is committed to a policy of equal employment opportunity and a program designed to increase the diversity of the Department. The Rockford Fire Department will recruit qualified persons in all available positions and will not discriminate against applicants or employees based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, handicap, military status, or any other legally protected status.

The Recruitment Plan will outline principles and goals to demonstrate our commitment through action plans, initiatives, and recommendations. This plan will identify a media outreach plan, strategies to engage all personnel in our recruiting efforts, and tracking mechanisms to measure success.

The ultimate goal of this plan is to further develop a diverse workforce that is well qualified to meet the challenges faced daily to protect and serve the citizens and visitors to the City of Rockford.

## **Recruitment Committee Members**

Matthew Knott, Division Chief, Rockford Fire Department

Jeff Kloweit, Recruiter, Rockford Fire Department

Joe Cascio, Captain, Rockford Fire Department

Tim O'Keefe, Captain, Rockford Fire Department

Luis Duran, Lieutenant, Rockford Fire Department

Will Pederson, Lieutenant, Rockford Fire Department

Rebecca Tyo, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

Jonathan Larson, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

Jose Montoya, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

Shawn Connors, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

James Cantu, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

Randy James, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

Matt Renfro, Firefighter/Paramedic, Rockford Fire Department

## Plan Organization and Structure

In order to successfully implement the Department's outreach and recruiting programs, all staff must be committed to the plan and its goals. Support will be provided to the Recruitment Committee by formalizing goals and ensuring adequate resources are provided to meet these goals. The work of the Committee will be thoroughly documented and reports will be prepared and presented to the department command staff at weekly staff meetings.

Responsibilities under this plan are outlined below:

1. Command Staff
  - a. Demonstrate commitment to the plan in all actions and communication
  - b. Provide continuing support for the program
  - c. Allocate staff and resources to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan
  - d. Hold staff members accountable for their roles in assisting with the outreach, recruitment, selection, and retention processes
2. Recruiting Committee
  - a. Assist with the implementation of the plan's goals within their assigned areas
  - b. Report to the Chief and Division Chief of Fire Prevention and Training on matters related to recruiting efforts
  - c. Recommend qualified personnel to function as liaisons to develop and foster relationships to bring forth qualified applicants
  - d. Offer innovative approaches in the areas of challenge toward goal attainment
  - e. Serve as a resource to assist with activities, events, and development of recruiting materials
3. Recruitment Staff
  - a. Develop and coordinate outreach and recruitment programs and activities
  - b. Develop techniques and strive for innovative approaches in recruiting
  - c. Encourage community partnerships
  - d. Track and measure success in our recruiting efforts
  - e. Serve as a point of contact for applicants who have expressed interest in our department
  - f. Develop recruitment aids such as brochures, exhibits, posters, videos, etc.
  - g. Attend conferences, training, and seminars related to recruiting as directed
  - h. Work with other city departments and local jurisdictions to discover best practices and exchange ideas in recruiting
  - i. Develop new practices where applicable and appropriate
  - j. Coordinate and participate in career fairs and other opportunities
  - k. Provide a regular update to the Division Chief of Training and Fire Prevention

- I. Maintain partnerships with various educational institutions in and around Rockford to ensure they are aware of our recruiting efforts

## **Specific Recruitment Goals**

### **Mission Statement**

The Rockford Fire Department will create and implement a plan to increase the number of qualified applicants from historically under-represented groups. We will work hard to attract a qualified workforce that is a representation of the citizens of the City of Rockford.

### **Core Values**

The strategic mission will be accomplished by:

- Implementing strategies to increase the cultural diversity of the workforce
- Promoting interactions with under-represented populations
- Enhancing policies and programs to assure equality of opportunity

### **Target Groups**

At this time, the Rockford Fire Department seeks to increase its recruitment efforts with respect to the following under-represented groups:

- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Native American
- Female

## City of Rockford Demographics

(Source U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed August 29, 2013)

White	65.1%
Black or African American	20.5%
Hispanic or Latino	15.8%
Asian	2.9%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.4%

## Recruitment Strategies

The goal is to create long-term opportunities and a sustainable program. This will be accomplished by a coordinated outreach and recruitment effort. These will include the following:

1. Partnership with Rockford Public Schools District #205
  - a. Internship Opportunities
  - b. Academy Program
2. Explorer Post
3. Outreach to higher education institutions
  - a. Rock Valley College
  - b. Rockford University
  - c. Northern Illinois University
4. Contact and outreach to Firefighter ABCs and Firefighter Diversity Council (an organization founded in 1999 to assist fire departments with increasing their diversity recruitment efforts)
5. Follow various recommendations of Fire 20/20 (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 2005 to support fire departments in recruiting and retaining qualified and diverse firefighters)
6. Marketing and Advertising
  - a. Create a RFD recruiting page
  - b. Ads posted on various websites, which may include the following:
    - i. diversityjobfinder.com
    - ii. latinosforhire.com
    - iii. NAACPjobfinder.com
    - iv. Firefighter's ABCs
  - c. Enhancements to Fire Department Website
    - i. Recruitment page
    - ii. On line applicant tracking
  - d. Newspaper, television, and radio advertising
  - e. Advertising on digital billboards
7. Focused Outreach
  - a. Paramedic school visits
  - b. Recruitment and Career fairs
  - c. Open house and orientation available for all applicants
  - d. Outreach materials and advertisements