Welcome to the NVFC’s Train Strong Webinar Series.

Today’s webinar is Volunteer EMS Recruitment: Positive Marketing and a Blended Service
The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides invaluable resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.

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PRESENTER

Julie “Jules” Scadden, PM, EMS-Ed

• Involved with EMS for over 27 years
• Director of EMS for Dysart Ambulance Service in Iowa
• Co-Chair of the Iowa EMS-C Advisory Council
• Vice-Chair of the NVFC’s EMS/Rescue section
OBJECTIVES

• Discuss the challenges of recruitment and retention in volunteer EMS
• Describe how marketing can improve recruitment and retention through positive imaging
• Identify challenges and benefits of blending paid providers into a volunteer service and how it can aid in recruitment of volunteers
• Describe methods to promote positive morale within the blended EMS service
CHALLENGES: CULTURES

- Increased age of rural residents
  - Increased age of EMS providers
- Connection perception
  - Older volunteer beliefs: giving back to community
    - Connected to neighbors
  - Younger volunteer beliefs: gain experience
    - Lack options for experience at EMT level
    - Move to “paid” job
      - Less connected emotionally to community
VOLUNTEERING CHALLENGES: OLDER GENERATION

- Aging
  - 60-80s still active
- Physiology
  - Higher injury risk
  - Higher burn-out behavior
- Higher expectations
  - Continuing Education
  - Disaster preparedness
- Time
- Documentation/computer
- HIPAA
CULTURAL SHIFT – HOW IT’S BEEN DONE

• Recruitment methods
  • Guilt
    • “If we don’t get volunteers, we will have to close the ambulance service”
  • Painting a rosy picture
    • You probably won’t to do more than a day of call or two a week
    • Sure, there is always someone who takes all the holidays
  • Flexibility (usually where we lost them)
    • You have to commit to 2 days/night a week
    • Full 12 hour shifts
    • But you can always get someone to trade if you need off
CHALLENGES: SERVICE CHANGES

• Increased demands – Service
  • Staffing 24/7/365
  • Public expectations
  • Cost
  • Training requirements
  • Transport distances
  • Regulatory paperwork
  • Disaster preparedness
  • Liability concerns
  • HIPAA
• Volunteer worth - National estimate: $25.43 per hour (Independent Sector-2019)
• No formal definition of volunteerism in EMS (firefighter and Medical responders)
• One-third of states
  • 911-response with transport capability are considered volunteer
• Declined by 12% since 1984
  • Call volume has tripled in most areas
• Age of EMS providers – average volunteers 39 yrs = 34 yrs non-volunteer
  • Rural trend to older >50s
  • Oldest active certification in IA – 93
  • Length of service average 22 yrs – older 30-40 yrs
VOLUNTEER AND RURAL SERVICES - DEMOGRAPHICS

- Gender
  - 29% women in EMS - paid (Nursing – 93%)
    - No clear data on women volunteers in EMS (NR data)
  - LEADS data
    - 38.4% of EMTs & 27.5% paramedics are female (includes paid & volunteer)
    - 72% male – paid (NR data)
      - 58% of EMTs & paramedics are volunteer
- Race/Ethnicity
  - 81% paid EMS are “White not Hispanic”
  - 9% Hispanic
  - 8% Black, not Hispanic
OVERALL FACTORS AFFECTING EMS WORKFORCE

- Wages
- Attractiveness of the occupation
- Awareness/public profile of profession
- Requirements – education & certification by state
- Number of education programs and program capacity
- Access to educational programs – rural areas
- Number of graduates
- Faculty availability for education programs
- Certification testing and pass rates
RURAL WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

• Recruitment & retention
  • Inconsistent data for analysis
    • Low call volumes
    • Inadequate data collection systems
    • Limited resources for research
  • Rural volunteer workforce
    • 74% rural, low-volume service
• Funding
  • Cost – education
  • Cost – equipment
  • Income – reimbursement (if billing)
  • Income – community donations
    • Grants
OVERALL FACTORS AFFECTING EMS WORKFORCE

- Licensure requirement by state
- Number cross-trained firefighters and police available to provide EMS
- Part-time or full-time work status
- Volunteers available to provide EMS services
- Injury, illness and disability (worker absence)
- Workforce turnover and retirement
- System funding
NVFC RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY (2014)

- Interest in volunteering
  - Higher in 18-34 demographic (44%) interested in operational volunteer with fire and EMS
  - 40% indicated interest in non-operational volunteering local department
    - Fundraising, safety/prevention education, recruitment
- Awareness of local needs & opportunities
  - Low recognition of need for volunteer fire and EMS in their community
    - 80% said “do not know” if local services are looking for volunteers
  - Low knowledge local service status (volunteer, paid or both)
NVFC RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY (2014)

- Attitudes towards volunteering for firefighting/EMS
  - Key behavioral determinants
    - Norms: *What people think is expected of them*
    - Self-standards: *What people expect of themselves*
    - Efficacy: *An individual’s confidence he or she can pull an action*
    - Environment: *Friends within the department, flexibility of schedule*
    - Rewards, Risks & Penalties: *Positive results of acting: actual and perceived negative results of acting or not acting*
    - Feelings: *Emotional benefits or barriers to action*
    - Control: *Perception of rigid requirements*
    - Investments: *All the costs – financial and otherwise – of acting*
RECRUITMENT

• Invitation
  • Personally by current members, friends or family
  • Community meeting informing public of the opportunity

• Ride alongs & public events
  • Firsthand experience allowed them to picture themselves in the role
  • Positive and valuable interactions with services

• PRIDE
  • Happy volunteers!
NVFC RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION SURVEY (2014)

- Drivers and/or attendants
- How volunteers became interested in becoming certified:
  - Personal connection to the service
  - Started out as a driver only or driver and/or attendant who assisted in the back
  - Evolved - desire to take classes to become certified provider
RECRUITMENT LOSSES

• Lost to follow-up
  • Unable to get in touch with someone to volunteer
    • Inquiries were unanswered
  • Did not feel they had been invited to join
  • Perceived sense of “must join now” or not at all.
    • Lack of choices, flexibility and levels of commitment
• “Don’t like” within the service
  • Could be a good candidate and good volunteer
  • Has to be weighed with internal moral
RETENTION NVFC SURVEY RESULTS

• Influencing factors for leaving:
  • Training – perceived as bad or inconvenient (time consuming and boring)
    • Flexible or convenient training online, innovative training methods, training
      that team builds – camaraderie
  • Senior leadership
    • Poor communication between officers and members
    • Poor treatment of new volunteers
    • Best efforts result in loss
    • Time commitment
    • Boredom
  • Influencing factors for staying
    • Enjoy the department and people – dedication to the department and
      community
    • Officers and senior members are encouraging
    • Enjoy what they do without expectation of returns
RECOMMENDATIONS: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

- Increase interest and awareness in volunteer opportunities
- Increase reach and frequency of personal invitations
- Find innovative ways for interested individuals to experience
- Track successful methods including conversion rates of those who join
- Develop innovative training opportunities including a training process for retention
- Develop appreciation programs
- Bring in the family!
RECRUITMENT METHODS

- Invitation
  - Personally by current members, friends or family
  - Community meeting informing public of the opportunity
  - Host recruitment events – open house/job fair

- Ride alongs & public events
  - Firsthand experience allowed them to picture themselves in the role
  - Positive and valuable interactions with services

- Outside the box
  - High schools – Silver cord
  - Colleges with medical programs – volunteer job fair
  - Community colleges with EMS classes
SOCIAL MEDIA ROLE
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

- Local Newspapers – even small ones
  - Picked up by bigger papers
  - Picked up by local TV news
  - Picked up by other social media
- Website – promotion and recruiting
  - Detailed information about the services and WHY they want to join
  - Benefits of being a volunteer
  - Training and equipment provided/required
  - FAQ page
- Facebook and Instagram
  - Facebook can target potential volunteers
  - Drive them to your website
  - Private message for possible recruits/promoters
SOCIAL MEDIA ROLE
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

• Instagram
  • Photos of volunteer events
  • Photos of volunteer appreciations
  • Drive to Facebook or website

• Twitter
  • Send out news blasts
  • Promote events
  • Drive to other social media platforms
  • Quick messages – promotions or notices

• Google +
  • Similar platform Facebook
  • Affordable enterprise for small volunteer services

Millennials/young recruits LOVE online/social media – They will market for you!
RECRUITMENT

• You’ve set the hook, now reel them in
  • Track your recruits to membership
  • Don’t lose data or demographics
  • Schedule appointments/meetings along the way
• BE accessible – calendars and all
• Share recruitment workflow with others
• Keep them engaged
  • Attend department events
  • Ride alongs (once cleared)
• Track marketing efforts for best returns
RESOURCES: RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

• NVFC FREE recruitment resources - Make Me A Firefighter program also for EMS
• Apply Safer Grant – Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response
• Google for non-profit programs
  • Must be 501 (c) (3)
  • $10,000/month in search advertising
    • Can be used for recruitment, fundraising, event promotions
  • Unlimited email accounts for organization
  • Google drive storage, shared calendars, YouTube enhancements
  • Local TV & radio advertising
    • May allow free advertising for recruitment efforts
• Create a video of your service
RETENTION

• Moral is #1 reason people leave
• Ensure organization is positively impacted by membership growth
  • Protect from negative, unintended consequences
• Ensure success both new members and long-term members
  • Mentorship with seasoned provider
• Create new member guide or orientation book
  • Checklists, SOPs, progress notes, primary maps, key forms, critical details
  • Enlist new members to help
• Create a member’s only private FB or group chat
BLENDING YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

• Advantages:
  • Uncovered shifts – usually days
  • Undesired shifts – usually weekends
  • CQI
  • Mentorship
  • Administrative assistance

• Potential disadvantages:
  • Unrealistic expectations
  • Resentment
  • Cost
TALE OF TWO VOLUNTEER SERVICES - THEIR EVOLUTION

Service #1
- “Owned” by two cities
- Private
- Finances: Ambulance Board
  - 4 each city
- Operations
  - Volunteer Council
- All Volunteer
  - Paid $1 hr call, $10 run
- Not municipal or 501 (c) 3
- Volunteer/board wanted paid director
  - Job description varied
  - NO benefits for hired staff

Service #1 Statistics
- 450 calls per year
- Daytime staffing – 69 y/o medic
- Volunteer breakdown initially
  - 4 Paramedics
  - 1 AEMT
  - 5 “attendants” non-certified
    - 4 local college students
  - 7 drivers (3 certified/no clinical care)
- Challenges:
  - Daytime staffing
  - Behind on compliance
  - Out-dated- SOGs
  - Low moral
  - No opportunity to become certified
TALE OF TWO VOLUNTEER SERVICES - THEIR EVOLUTION

Service #2
- “Owned” by city
- Government
- Finances: City Council - budget
- Operations - paid director – 1980s
- All volunteer
  - Paid $10 run, $20 if over 2 hrs; paid meetings and classes
- 1 full time paramedic – 36 hrs
- Director retires
  - Covered avg 74 hrs week
- Community – 1300 – super rural
- Billing – inhouse
- Closest hospital 16 miles
- Closest appropriate hospital – 25 miles

Service #2 Statistics
- 250 calls per year
- Daytime staffing – paid director
- Volunteer down Initially
  - 2 paramedics
  - 1 AEMT
  - 4 EMTs
  - 7 drivers
- Challenges:
  - Daytime staffing
  - Behind on compliance
  - Old equipment
  - Out-dated- SOGs
  - Low moral
  - No opportunity to become certified
TALE OF TWO VOLUNTEER SERVICES - THEIR EVOLUTION

Service #1 – Struggle for dominance
Volunteers:
- Director takes orders from us
- Write budget that we approve
- Update protocols and policies that we approve
- Actively recruit new volunteers which will be voted on by the membership
  - Majority vote of volunteer council
  - Teach EMS classes for initial and continuing education
- Do all inventory

Board:
- Volunteers take orders from director
- Write budget for approval by board
- Update protocols and policies for volunteers to follow
- Recruit new volunteers for membership
- Teach initial and continuing education
- Direct volunteers on operational needs
- Write grants for new equipment director deems necessary
TALE OF TWO VOLUNTEER SERVICES - THEIR EVOLUTION

Service #2 – Struggle for operational knowledge
• Director has been all powerful – monthly report to City Council
  • Volunteers were belittled for minor mistakes
  • Drivers had not knowledge of EMS equipment or supplies
  • Drivers were not “allowed” in the back
  • Equipment is old and difficult to use
  • Volunteers are not provided operational guidelines to follow
  • No knowledge of new equipment or supplies being used
  • Repairs on all equipment, including vehicles is internal
  • Education is 1 hour monthly – repeated year to year
  • Volunteers felt “out on a limb”
  • Personal “like/dislike” dictated how volunteer was treated
  • No orientation—new person was given a pager and told to respond
TALE OF TWO VOLUNTEER SERVICES - THEIR EVOLUTION

Service #1
• Recruitment of college students
  • No coverage during summer
• New director – 3 years in EMS
  • Board and volunteer council direct
• College EMS FR – discontinued
• Internal strife:
  • 5 old-guard feel disenfranchised
    • Cohesion is segregated within the service: young vs old
  • Moral is low among one group
    • Both groups talk negatively about the service
• PREJUDICE

Service #2 – Enthusiasm for growth
• Recruitment of in town volunteers 8
  • 1 out of town new EMT
• Hired 2 part-time individuals
• Held EMT class in town
  • Certified 6 new EMTS
• Increased education – 2 hrs monthly which includes skills
• Wrote grants and raised funds for new equipment
• Orientation for all members moral
  – Cohesion of all members
  • Too many respond
• Publication of ambulance news!
• PRIDE
BLENDING YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- Discuss with volunteers – buy in is vital
- Why are you hiring?
  - Fill shifts
  - Level of provider?
- Who are you hiring?
  - How do they feel about volunteers?
  - Have they ever volunteered?
- Expectations
  - What will they do differently than the volunteers?
  - Will they “blend” with the existent volunteers?

Positive outcomes:
- Fill open shifts
- Cover undesirable shifts – weekends
  - Can aid in recruitment
- Help with education and skills
  - Mentor new volunteers
- Introduce new or different ideas
- Assist with new equipment
- Recruitment through networking
- See the volunteers as equals
SUMMARY

• Use of data for recruitment and retention for volunteer EMS and fire improves methodology
• Positivity and pride within a service are key to both recruitment and retention
• Social media is a powerful tool for recruitment and retention when used professionally
• A blended EMS service can aid in recruiting and retaining volunteers
• Blending a volunteer service can prevent the loss of a service when volunteer and paid providers are treated with equal respect
• Marketing your volunteers is as important as marketing your service!
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• EMS Agenda 2050: A People-Centered Vision for the Future of Emergency Medical Services: ems/gov


• First Arriving: 10 Tips to Drive Volunteer Firefighter & EMS Recruitment in 2019
Q&A SESSION
POST WEBINAR THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS?

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!

#CANCER  #FUNDING  #TRAINING  #RECRUITMENT  #SAFETY  #RETENTION

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THANK YOU!

Jules K. Scadden, PM
Director of EMS
Dysart Ambulance Service
jkscadden@gmail.com
@julesKaye
@julesscadden

Caroline Stachowiak
Program Coordinator
NVFC
caroline@nvfc.org
202-887-5700