Welcome to the NVFC’s Train Strong Webinar Series.

Today’s webinar is “The Case for Diversity and Inclusivity.”
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.

NOT A MEMBER? Visit nvfc.org/join-nvfc today and you will be eligible for a wide range of benefits including insurance, training, special member promotions, and more!
Our Presenter: Ali Rothrock

Ali Rothrock, CEO & Lead Instructor

ON THE JOB AND OFF

[Image of Ali Rothrock and a sign with the text "ON THE JOB AND OFF"]
Objectives:

• What is the difference between equity and equality?

• Why must inclusive environment exist before we can hope to have a diverse one?
Objectives:

- What is the existing culture and how does that impact all of us?

- What are the benefits of a diverse workforce and what value does it add to our mission?
What does your mission or vision statement say?

“To save lives and protect property”

“To preserve life and property; promote public safety; and foster community support services in a professional manner.”
**Equality** is treating everyone the same.

**Equity** is giving everyone what they need to be successful.

Equality aims to promote fairness, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same help.
Equality vs. Equity example

*we are not lowering standards*
Diversity vs. Inclusion

**Diversity** is the "what"; **inclusion** is the "how."

**Diversity** focuses on the makeup of your workforce and **inclusion** is a measure of culture that enables **diversity** to thrive.

We cannot hope to have a diverse culture if we don’t first have an inclusive one.
Diversity vs. Inclusion

Diversity

Diversity is the mix.
Inclusion is making the mix work.

-- Andres Tapia
Diversity = Safety Benefits for All

“Other safety benefits have been the result of diversifying the service. For example, as women entered the fire service in greater numbers, vendors began to develop more ergonomic tools, apparatus, and better fitting PPE. These improvements lead to fewer injuries and safer performance by ALL firefighters.”

Culture Bridges to Justice
https://culturalbridgestojustice.org/
True Diversity:

- Does not just exist for diversity’s sake
- Tokenism will not get us very far
- Is spearheaded by leaders who not only embrace it, but actively seek it out
Safety Benefits from Diversity

“as in the case of community risk reduction, ongoing, proactive, positive relationships between the department and all the communities served will lead to more thorough and relevant disaster preparedness, response, as well as post-disaster resilience. More such relationships will be possible when the department includes members of those communities.”

Culture Bridges to Justice
https://culturalbridgestojustice.org/
What are the benefits of a truly diverse workforce?

• A variety of perspectives which increases productivity and creativity
  • Improved performance and engagement
  • A workforce that looks like the community it serves
Currently

About 4% of the fire service is made up of women

Professions like construction management, farming, law enforcement, and the military have higher percentages of women

Why?
The Fire Service is a Microcosm

The fire service does not exist in a vacuum and falls victim to the same racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia that our society deals with.

We are not helpless to this but are active participants to either continue these cycles or break them.
The long-term impacts of feeling unsafe in our work environment:

March 2019, Journal of the Society of Occupational Medicine

“In addition to the stressors associated with the work of first-responders, women firefighters are likely to experience challenges associated with being female in a male oriented work environment.

Gender discrimination and harassment are also likely to increase a woman’s risk for traumatic stress and suicidal ideation.”
What are the benefits of a truly diverse workforce?

A workforce that looks like the community it serves
A Case for Customer Service

“Common sense tells us our customers will be better served by personnel who speak the language, are familiar with the cultural norms, spiritual rituals, celebrations, history, interpersonal and familial communication norms, needs and expectations when faced with illness, death and dying, and the myriad of other aspects of life that are not the same culture to culture.”

Culture Bridges to Justice
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What does your mission or vision statement say?

“We are dedicated to being the best community focused fire and rescue department that meets the ever-changing needs of our community while ensuring a safe and secure environment for all through professional development, unity and teamwork.”
Q&A
Post-webinar thoughts or questions?

VOLUNTEERVOICES.NVFC.ORG

Or contact Caroline Stachowiak at: caroline@nvfc.org
THANK YOU!

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