



# Recruitment and Retention

## *Tip of the Month*

### #2 of 50

## Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century...continued

As part of a FEMA/USFA project, the Public Safety and Environmental Protection Institute of Philadelphia based St. Joseph's University, in collaboration with the NVFC conducted research to better define the reasons fewer people volunteer their time to organizations such as volunteer emergency service agencies. If your members are leaving, it may be for the same reasons the research pointed out... - a lack of time? - poor leadership? - health and medical problems? - family responsibility? - volunteering no longer being relevant to the member? - relocation? - other interests? - competing demands (work, family, school, sports, etc.)? - a problematic organization? - the fact that no one asked them to stay. To know for sure, you may have to poll members who have left your organization.

What makes people stay involved is a separate issue. Much of the ability to retain people centers on motivating members through a shared VISION. Research has found that this is facilitated effectively in many cases when an organization can: - accommodate individual needs - provide rewards and recognition - provide adequate supervision and leadership - challenge members. Retention issues are not only individual, they can be by group, and may be local issues. While volunteer emergency responders typically join to help others, over time new factors enter into why they stay. In fact, today, benefits play a significant role in why and how long members stay. Research from St. Joseph's University found numerous types of retention programs that worked; however, what worked in one community did not necessarily work in a neighboring community, reinforcing that recruitment and retention are local issues. Again, you will need to poll local personnel to determine reasons members no longer volunteer.

The critical success factor is someone locally taking responsibility and authority to work recruitment and retention issues to sustain needed staffing.

Credit: Jenaway, William F., Ph.D., Recruitment and Retention for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Emergency Services. VFIS News, Volume 7 Number 2 pages 1-2

Additional information on this topic can be found at: [www.becomeapafirefighter.com](http://www.becomeapafirefighter.com)  
[www.responderhelp.com](http://www.responderhelp.com); [www.nvfc.org](http://www.nvfc.org) or call 1-800-ASK-NVFC (275-6832).

***Need help for your Recruitment & Retention program. The FASP (through a SAFER Grant) provides consultative services to help you with recruiting and retaining members. For help, look for a contact us through the FASP website <http://pafirefighters.org/contact-us/> with your email and needs.***