



Virginia Fire Chiefs Association

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Distinguished Members of the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates

Greetings from the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association! The VFCA is a statewide Association that has over 1100 members, both volunteer and career, from across Virginia. Our organization was established in 1930 and is celebrating its 95th Anniversary this year. The VFCA mission is to advance Virginia's Fire service through Leadership, Education and Advocacy.

The VFCA is an active organization working hard to address the needs of its membership and to help ensure the safety and welfare of the citizens and visitors of the Commonwealth. One way this is addressed is through effective lobbying both in Richmond and in our nation's capital. The primary focus for our legislative efforts over the past two years is the establishment of a sustainable funding source to help ensure the adequate delivery of fire and EMS services in all regions of the Commonwealth.

In 2023, the General Assembly requested a fire service needs assessment (HB2175), but with the late adoption of the budget, funding was not provided for a third-party review. Instead, the Secretary of Public Safety directed the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFFP) to be the lead on conducting the statewide assessment. A survey was conducted and generated an 85%+ return by localities. The report identified significant needs statewide specific to staffing, facilities, apparatus, personal protective equipment, fireground equipment, and training.

In 2024, the General Assembly allocated funds to the Secretary of Public Safety to have VDFFP's internal report reviewed and validated. Consequently, VCU's Wilder Center was hired, and their report was released in early January 2025. This report did in fact validate the 2023 VDFFP Report and clearly identifies recommendations for the legislature to use in determining their next steps. You may view the full report here: [VCU CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY-FIRE & EMS ASSESSMENT - Virginia Fire Chiefs Association](#)

Unlike our law enforcement colleagues, localities receive NO state tax dollars to help deliver essential fire and EMS services. The law enforcement community receives 599 funding and/or Comp Board funding. The only funds localities receive are passed through funds from a surcharge on fire insurance, which is 1% of the cost of the premium and is passed through on the vehicle registration fee. Part of the money generated from the latter goes to the General Fund to support other services.

The VFCA realizes this issue will not be resolved in the next couple of years, but we welcome the opportunity to continue these critical discussions and work with you in the development of a sustainable funding source to help ensure the delivery of Fire and EMS services to citizens and visitors across the Commonwealth. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Vance Cooper
VFCA President