

Climate Assessment Actions

The Organizational Task Force (now the Organizational Climate Review Workgroup) has worked diligently since 2016 to identify opportunities for improvement within the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, develop recommendations to address any gaps, and implement positive meaningful changes. Many of the 10 workgroups are in the process of completing their work and are preparing for the opportunity to brief the County's Executive Review Committee on their findings and recommendations. Additionally, FRD senior leadership has begun reviewing the recommendations in coordination with the County leadership, including the County Executive, Deputy County Executive, and the County Attorney to determine the path forward. Senior leadership is planning to meet with each of the workgroups to discuss the recommendations and outline the implementation plans. It is important to note that some recommendations may not be possible. Those that are will be sorted into short-, medium-, or long-term goals and an implementation team will be developed to ensure their completion.

Below is a list of achievements since 2016 aimed to enhance the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's climate:

2016

- Implemented an Organizational Task Force to address department training issues related to sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, mental health, conflict management, and women's issues. Majority of initiatives are completed
- June - Completed training for all uniformed career, volunteer, and civilian supervisors with a mandatory face to face meeting.
- September – Required all department members complete online EEO training modules
- September - First High School Cadet Program, begun in partnership with FCPS and the FRD, provided trade training to youth to help recruit a diverse youthful workforce. 15 Students participated, (10 male, 5 female)
- December – Conducted one-week officer development school for newly promoted officers

January 2017

- Conducted Senior Leadership Mission & Vision meeting with Senior Management

February 2017

- Provided the Organizational Climate Review Assessment to FRD personnel, allowing one week for review and feedback
- Conducted face to face meetings with assistant chiefs, deputy chiefs, senior staff, battalion chiefs, civilian managers, employee groups, and stations personnel
- Established an initial draft of primary themes
- Attended initial meetings with the Executive Review Committee

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- Coordinated with OPA and developed an internal communications plan. Conducted follow up meetings with FRD personnel, other county agency staff, employee group representatives, and outside non-county personnel to discuss the themes, and developed the top priorities with their input
- Prioritized the themes and develop a draft action plan
- Began selection of leads and co-leads
- Women's Program Office implemented mentoring program and IB published seeking mentors. Implemented during 143rd Recruit School.

March 2017

- Finalized selection of leads and co-leads
- Began selection and solicitation of workgroup members
- Conducted 1st Ambassador Meeting on March 24
- Conducted Organizational Climate Review Meeting with Senior Leadership
- Drafted an initial action plan and developed themes
- Met with Executive Review Committee
- Conducted final Organizational Climate Task Force meeting

April 2017

- Developed and delivered scenario based training for all FRD Officers and civilian managers regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and conflict resolution training on April 3 and 6 with OHREP, Sara Simmons, and staff.
- Met with Colonel Halstead to establish a West Point Leadership curriculum for senior staff, captains, lieutenants and civilian supervisors
- Contracted with Colonel Halstead to deliver a modified West Point Leadership Course for senior management for all battalion chiefs, deputy chiefs, assistant chiefs and the Fire Chief. The course was conducted during May and June.
- Contracted with Colonel Halstead to deliver a modified West Point Leadership Course for lieutenants and captains. The course was conducted on June 7, 8, and 10.
- Conceptualized a train the trainer for peer trainers to deliver conflict resolutions skills for station personnel
- FRD Employee Hotline Established
- Finalized original draft action plan
- Conducted Organizational Climate Review Meetings and Task workgroups meetings
- Attended conflict resolution peer train the trainer class with Sara Simmons' team
- Saving Our Own Summit – Suicide Prevention planning begun. Summit to be delivered in September
- Began planning the Young Women's Day Camp

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May 2017

- Operations Assistant Chief began “brown bag lunches’ with field personnel to discuss the Climate Review and other pertinent issues
- Fire Chief began “drop-in” meetings to gather ground truth from the personnel in the field
- Delivered West Point Leadership Training for Senior Management (52 members)
- I-Women’s conference awarded to FRD to be hosted in May 2018
- Conducted two Organizational Climate Review Meetings
- Teleconference with OHREP to develop face-to-face FRD Training to begin in July
- Emailed all the women in the department, soliciting participation on the Women’s Initiative Workgroup
- Conducted a Command Staff Meeting with County Executive Long, Deputy County Executive Rohrer, Fire Chief Bowers, all Assistant Chiefs, all Deputy Chiefs, and all Battalion Chiefs.

June 2017

- Workgroups defined/refined their mission statements and developed/submitted data request
- Convened a workgroup to develop a formal action plan to address the initiatives listed in Organizational Climate Review
- Conducted an all-hands meeting with the Deputy County Executive and workgroups to discuss progress, expectations and guidance
- Three Ambassador Meetings – including one all-hands meeting with all workgroup members and the Deputy County Executive
- Began developing on-going training for all supervisors
- Conducted Community Based Strategic Planning to refine the FRD mission, vision, core values and define path forward
- First High School Cadet Program concluded – a partnership with FCPS and the FRD to provide trade training to youth to recruit a diverse youthful workforce

July 2017

- Completed West Point Leadership for Senior Leadership
- Completed West Point Leadership for Company Officers (400 Members)
- Conducted a teleconference with Leads and Co-Leads to reinforce expectations
- Organizational Climate Review Assessment Plan released
 - All workgroup members directed to review in its entirety and crosswalk prior initiatives with initiatives outlined in the plan
- FRD Data Workgroup met to determine what reliable data is available internally

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- Hiring Workgroup Survey distributed to Metro Fire Chiefs
- Behavioral Health Workgroup developed survey to be distributed to the department
- Young Women's one week Day Camp hosted at the Fire and Rescue Academy
- OHREP began delivery of EEO training to FRD Personnel at the station level
- Continued training with the Mental Health First Aid program with Operations personnel
- Conducted a Firehouse orientation with 16 civilians, both County and FRD involved with various workgroups. Provided a classroom session, tour of a fire station, the Fire and Rescue Academy, and conducted a question and answer session.
- Behavioral Health Workgroup scheduled a meeting with the Chief of Police's Office to discuss their use of a university to conduct a critical analysis study on the environmental factors that affect behavioral health concerns
- Conducted mandatory meeting with Senior Leadership to review the Organizational Climate Review Assessment Plan
 - Provided the following direction and talking points

Direction:

1. Review the Action Plan - Document on TargetSolutions
2. Immediately schedule station and work unit conversations with personnel. Use the provided PowerPoint to guide the conversation.
3. Complete the conversations with personnel by August 31, 2017 – Document on TargetSolutions
4. Engage, encourage, and facilitate routine conversations about the core themes in the report and action plan
5. Engage, encourage, and facilitate discussion with Theme Workgroup Leads, Co-Leads and workgroup members about thoughts, points, and solutions
6. Communications – share information and updates with personnel by reviewing FireNet for weekly messaging
7. Review the accountability-tracking scorecard with your personnel

Talking-Discussion Points

1. Opportunity to affect positive change within our department
2. Ensure that our department's environment, climate, and culture are welcoming and safe for everyone at all times
3. Encourage and engage in respectful, open, honest conversations about difficult subjects without any reprisal
4. Bring solutions to the action plan initiatives
5. The action plan is a living document and work in progress
6. Workgroups formed to address themes from the Gallagher Report
7. Workgroups have already begun working on initiatives, recommendations, and solutions

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8. Ultimately, we will raise awareness and achieve positive outcomes to our climate and culture

August

- Ongoing OHREP EEO Training for FRD (260 people as of the beginning of August)
- Lead/Co-Lead Meeting scheduled for August 10
- Data workgroup meeting conducted at the Government Center
- Finalized the EMS Workgroup Survey; will be distributed to the department personnel.
- Contracted with Art Jackson to deliver diversity, conflict resolutions, and teambuilding training to all officers and supervisors in October.
- Secured nationally renowned speakers Gordon Graham and Frank Viscuso for 2018 training to further develop officers and supervisors as related to initiatives identified in the Climate Review
- OHREP completed first round of EEO training to FRD personnel at the station level (1000+ received the training).
- FireNet link to Action Plan and Scorecard established
- Community Based Strategic Plan released.
- EMS Climate Survey distributed to department personnel.
- Hired new professional standards officer.
- Began evaluation and update of investigative policies and procedures.

September

- The FRD hosted approximately 150 people at the Saving Our Own Summit on September 8. Following its success, a decision was made to host the summit annually. Began planning for 2018 summit.
- EMS Workgroup provided initial recommendations
- Began development of Lieutenant Officer Development School and determined the need to conduct a development school for each respective rank (Lieutenant through Deputy Chief)
- Second High School Cadet Program began. Class comprised of 14 students (13 male, one female)

October

- Updated Sexual Harassment and Discrimination SOP's to mirror County policy.
- Horse Sense for Leaders delivered to approximately 110 department personnel.
- Northern Virginia Leadership and Development Institute Company and Command Officer course on October 15-21, 30 department officers and senior leaders attended and assisted with the delivery of the course

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- Mandatory Officer Training delivered on October 11-13, by Art Jackson regarding diversity, conflict management, and leadership to 400+ department officers.
- Fire Chief Expectation Meeting – held with newly promoted supervisors (uniformed and civilian). Meeting will be conducted twice annually to ensure understanding of the Fire Chief’s vision, expectations, and department mission
- Alternative Staffing opportunities provided to retain personnel
 - Pilot Job Share created at the Fire and Rescue Academy (two women)
 - Flex Staffing program filled (five women, one man)
- Delivered “Introduction to Firehouse Leadership” class to the 142nd Recruit School. The course content included defining the difference between leadership traits, skills, and principles; defining those leadership traits, skills, and principles; organizational expectations, both the Fire Chief’s and of the firehouse; organizational change; the responsibilities of an effective follower; the concept of crew resource management and cultural change.

November

- Leadership and Professional Development Workgroup briefed the Executive Review Committee with recommendations
- Met with Deputy County Executive, Department of Human Resources (DHR), Office of the County Attorney (OCA), to discuss recommendations being produced by workgroups and impact to OCA’s work with Department of Justice
- K-9 Therapy pilot program implemented
- Community Based Strategic Plan printed and placed in each work location and Core Values poster being updated
- Women’s Initiative Workgroup survey distributed to department personnel.
- Delivered “Introduction to Firehouse Leadership” class to the 143rd Recruit School.
- Recommendations provided to OCA for review

December

- Hiring Workgroup briefed the Executive Review Committee with recommendations
- FRD personnel scheduled to complete the three-day Basic Mediation Course
- Women’s Initiative Workgroup conducted individual interviews with 152 women in the department.
- Fitness course developed by Well-Fit, available for all department members, yet specifically designed for women to address physical challenges unique to women in the department.
- Work performance practice/coaching offered to department personnel in preparation for 2018 physical abilities testing.
- Discussed hosting the National JEMS Conference – Fire Chief will reach out to Prince George’s County to discussion steps forward.

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- 12 FRD members completed the Fairfax County three-day Mediation Course.
- Fire Chief, Assistant Chief's met with DHR to discuss implementation of executive coaches
- Operations senior management (Assistant Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Deputy Chief aides, Special Operations Battalion Chiefs, and civilian staff) participate in a team building course delivered by the Office of Development and Training. More sessions to be held in 2018
- Began preparation for a February 2018 Executive Roundtable discussion with senior management (Fire Chief through Battalion Chiefs and civilian equivalent) facilitate by DHR.
- Fairfax County web address changed from www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fr/ to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/