



# Fire and Rescue Department

## Climate Assessment

Fire Chief Richard R. Bowers

# Opening Remarks

- Opportunity to effect positive change in the Fire & Rescue Department
- Ensure an environment, climate, and culture that is welcoming, positive, healthy, nurturing and safe for all
- Ensure equitable opportunities
- Deliberative, collaborative process and effort
- Action, engagement, leadership, dialogue, education, training, and effective communication
- Executive Review Committee

# Goals & Action Plan

- Fire Chief Opening Remarks
  - Unified in making positive improvements
  - Desire to remove any real or perceived barriers
  - Hire the right people, train them the right way and inspire excellence
- Goal 1 – **Enhance** and **sustain** dedication, and create a safe, positive, and welcoming workplace environment for all members.
- Goal 2 – **Enhance** and **sustain** effective leadership, professional development, and training.
- Goal 3 – **Review** and **enhance** policies, education, training, reporting, compliance, and investigative/accountability practices to ensure zero tolerance of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and retaliation.
- Goal 4 – **Develop, enhance, and provide** effective human relations and conflict resolution training, policies and strategies.
- Goal 5 – **Review** and **ensure** effective, fair and equitable hiring, retention, and promotional opportunities, processes and practices.

# Action Plan - Workgroups

*Fire Chief and Assistant Chiefs provide oversight, guidance and facilitation*

- Behavioral Health
- Dedication & Service Delivery
- EMS Initiatives
- Hiring and Retention
- Human Relations & Conflict Resolution
- Investigative Policies & Procedures
- Leadership & Professional Development Training
- Promotional Initiatives
- Volunteer Initiatives
- Women's Initiatives

# Action Plan - Workgroups

- Diverse Workgroups – 130 members
  - All Uniformed Ranks (FF – FC)
  - 49 Women
  - 28 Civilian Staff
  - 28 Protected Class
  - 16 Volunteers
  - 11 External Agencies
- Interagency Collaboration and Support
  - Multi-Agency Involvement (DHR, CAO, OHREP, OD&T, Civil Service, etc.)
  - Department of Justice Requirements
  - Ongoing Discussions & Collaboration
- Foundation for Implementing Change
- Executive Review Committee
  - Workgroup Presentations

# Workgroup Discussion – Women’s Initiatives

- Workgroup
  - Multi-Agency Representation
    - FRD Lead – Lt. Katja Lancing
    - DHR Co-Lead – Shelley Cobb
    - DHR Facilitator – Robin Baker
  - Multi-Gender (14 Women, 3 Men)

- Scope of Work

- Research

	NFPA National Average	Fairfax County FRD
Women	7%	12%
Women in Senior Leadership (DC & AC)	2.4%	0%

- Department Survey - 345 Responded (261 Men, 84 Women)
      - Personnel and personal issues exist, however not gender specific
      - ‘Widespread distrust of senior staff’
    - Individual Interviews w/ 158 women
      - Less than 8% of women feel there is a “systemic” women’s issue

# Workgroup Discussion – Women’s Initiatives

- Common Themes
  - 95% of interviewed have not had any problems, concerns, or mistreatment within the last 5 years
  - Majority state “if anything, they get better treatment; help is offered more often”
  - Retention
    - 85% plan to stay for 25 years
    - 10% plan to leave at 20 years
    - 5% view FRD as a stepping stone
  - Promotion
    - 75% plan to promote
    - 15% happy in current position
    - 10% will not promote due to lack of EMS rank structure
  - Attrition
    - Injury
    - Family
    - Career Change
  - ‘The Wedge’

# Workgroup Discussion – Women’s Initiatives

- Recommendations

- Ensure representation in Senior Staff
- Retention Strategies
  - Increase Flex Staffing and/or Job Share opportunities
  - Rotate positions for senior employees
  - Develop Women’s Mentoring Program
  - Enhance annual medical examination
  - Allow ALS Technicians and Fire Medics to bid for Medic OIC positions
- Evaluate promotional opportunities
- Continue to evaluate & enhance uniforms and facilities



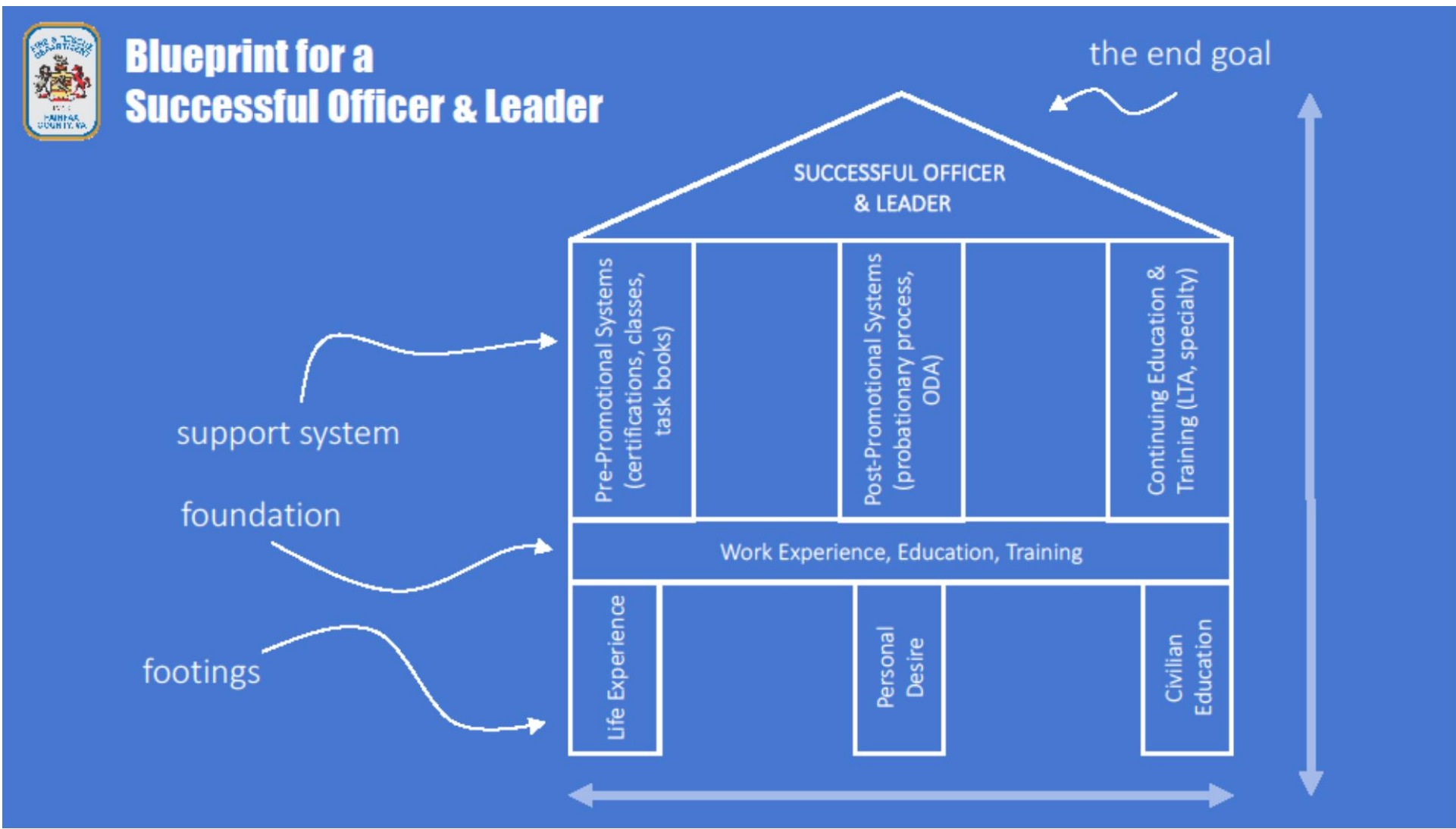
# Workgroup Discussion - Leadership & Professional Development

- Scope of Work - Mission
  - Create a comprehensive, cohesive, systematic, and sustainable approach for training and education of all Fire & Rescue Department members.
  - Engage a diverse set of members representing career, volunteer, civilian staff, and other County agencies to ensure an inclusive perspective that produces a clear and defined path to success for our organization.
  - Collectively build an effective continuum of training that affirms the personal and professional knowledge, skills, and abilities required for effective leadership and will set the standard and forge the expectations that will craft a culture and climate of long term success for our Department.

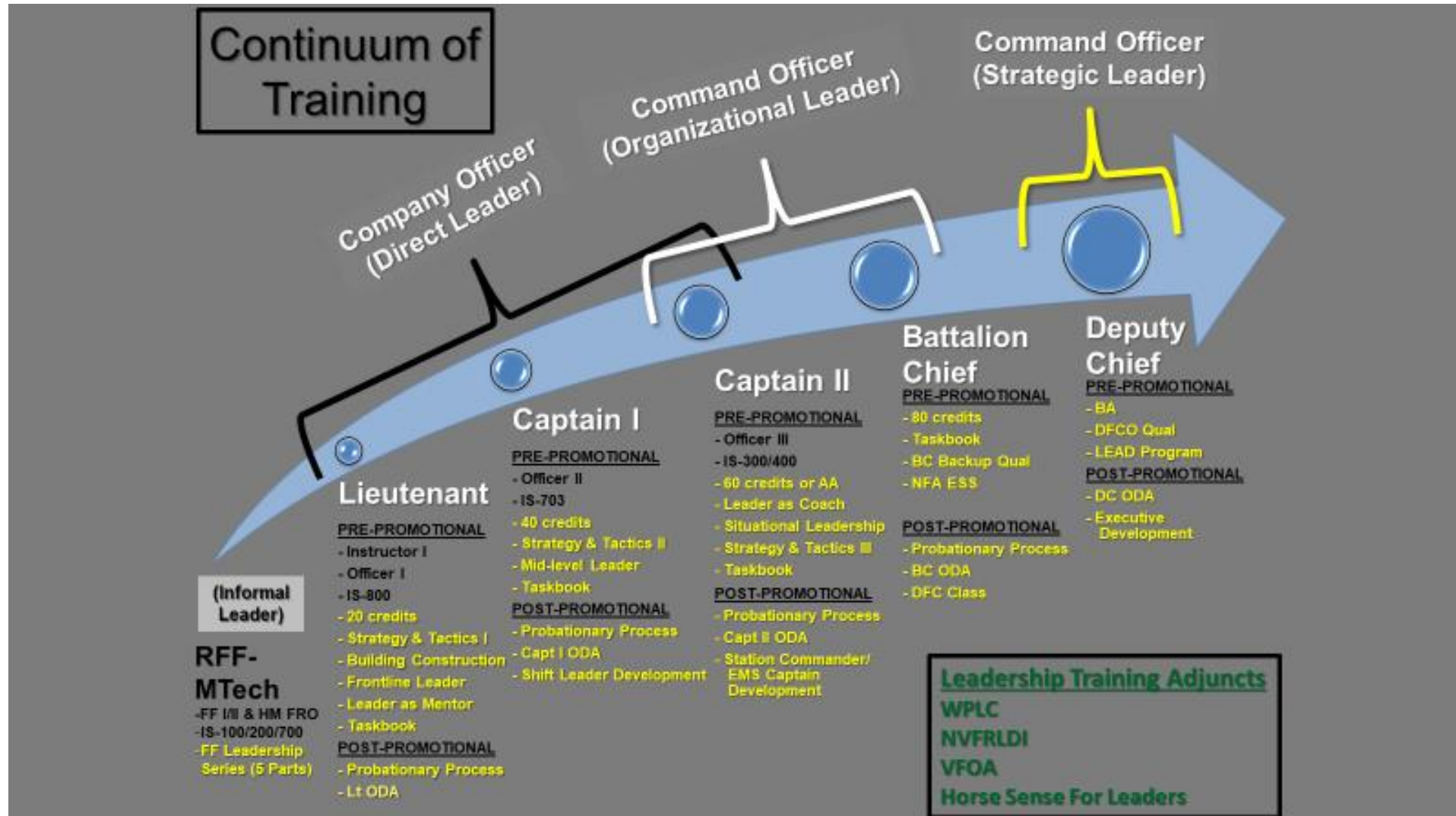
# Workgroup Discussion - Leadership & Professional Development

- Recommendations:
  - Development of the Continuum of Training (COT)
  - Creation of a comprehensive, cohesive and systematic approach to training
  - Focus on specific, targeted and relevant training and education
  - Follow a model that begins training for leadership upon entry as a Recruit and expands at every rank up to and including Deputy Chief

# Workgroup Discussion - Leadership & Professional Development



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## LEADERSHIP TRAITS

**Trait - a distinguishing quality or characteristic**

- ◎ Fair
- ◎ Accountable
- ◎ Integrity
- ◎ Reasonable
- ◎ Fearless
- ◎ Authentic
- ◎ eXperienced
- ◎ Loyal
- ◎ Engaged
- ◎ Ability
- ◎ Decisive
- ◎ Self-Motivated

# Workgroup Discussion – Hiring & Retention

- Overview of Membership
  - Diverse multi-agency
    - Firefighter to Battalion Chief
    - Civilian staff from multiple agencies
- Scope of Workgroup
  - National survey to Metro Fire Chiefs
  - COG Comparisons
  - Personal interviews with internal and external departments
    - FRD Recruitment
    - FCPD Recruitment
    - Loudoun County Fire and Rescue
    - Virginia Beach Fire Department

# Workgroup Discussion – Hiring & Retention

- Discussion Points
  - Raising the Bar
  - Looking for Untapped Markets
  - Policy/Process Review and Continuous Evaluation
- Recommendations
  - Recruitment Section
  - Recruitment Process
  - Applicant Process
  - Rating Process
  - Selection Process
  - Onboarding

# Achievements

- Updated Strategic Plan & Core Values
- Expanded Job Share & Flexible Staffing (Currently 7 Women & 1 Man)
- Renewed Officer Training
- Assured adherence of FRD policy to County policy
  - Compare and update administrative Standard Operating Procedures - ongoing
  - Eliminate SOP's that are redundant to County policies
- Streamlined
  - Hiring application process
  - Promotional application process
- Evaluated facilities & vendor contracts for inclusivity
- Emphasized & invested in Behavioral Health



# Achievements

- Assigned ALS Providers to all apparatus
- Enhanced internal communications & expectations
  - Weekly FC Message
  - Climate Assessment Report, Assessment Plan, & links to County policies:
    - Posted to Firenet
    - Discussed during:
      - Focused discussions w/Senior Management
      - FC Station discussions
      - All-Station & Staff teleconferences
      - Brown Bag Lunches – AC Johnson
      - FC Drop-In visits – Open honest discussion w/ No Agenda

# Next Steps

- Evaluated & prioritized recommendations – completed initial review
  - Immediate
  - Mid-Term
  - Long-Term
- Determine budgetary impact & feasibility
- Continue Officer Development & Leadership Training
- Finalize recommendations with County Attorney, Department of Justice, and the Executive Review Committee
- FC & AC's meet with each workgroup to discuss final recommendations
- Establish an Implementation Team:
  - Facilitator
  - Consultant
- Prepare draft summary report

# Questions

