

Recommendations for Staffing, Recruiting, and Retention in the City of Victoria's Volunteer Fire Department

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Resilient Communities Project

Outline

- Background information
- Staffing
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Conclusion



Volunteer Firefighters¹

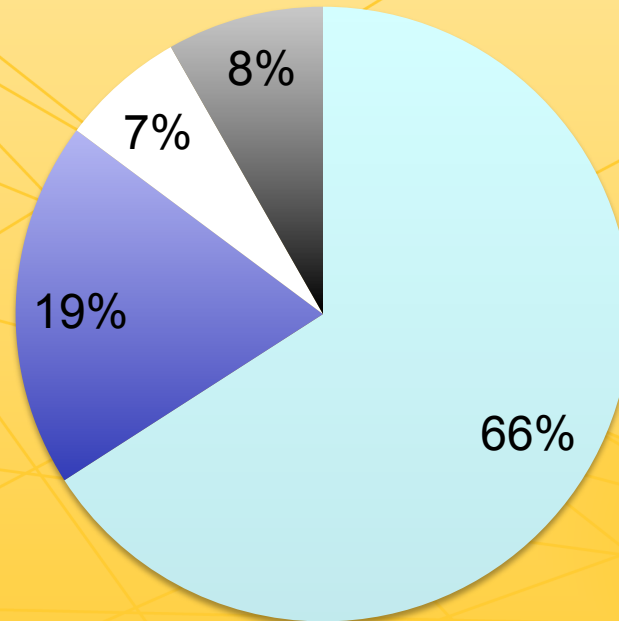
- Volunteers comprise 69% of firefighters in the United States
- Saves the country an estimated \$139.8 billion per year



Types of Firefighters in the US

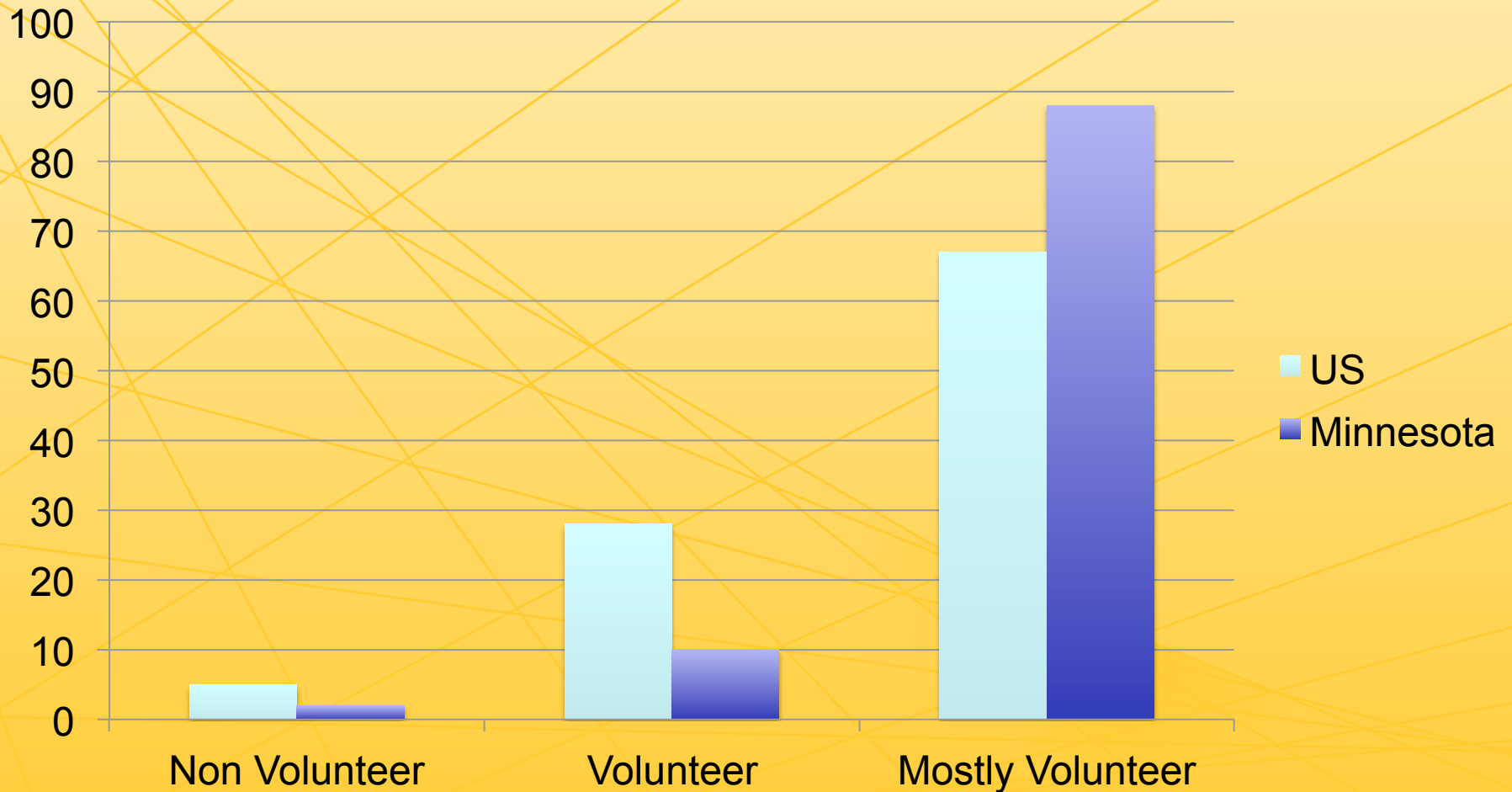
Types of Firefighters

■ All volunteer ■ Mostly volunteer ■ Mostly career ■ All career



¹ U.S. Fire Administration, 2014

Comparison with Minnesota¹

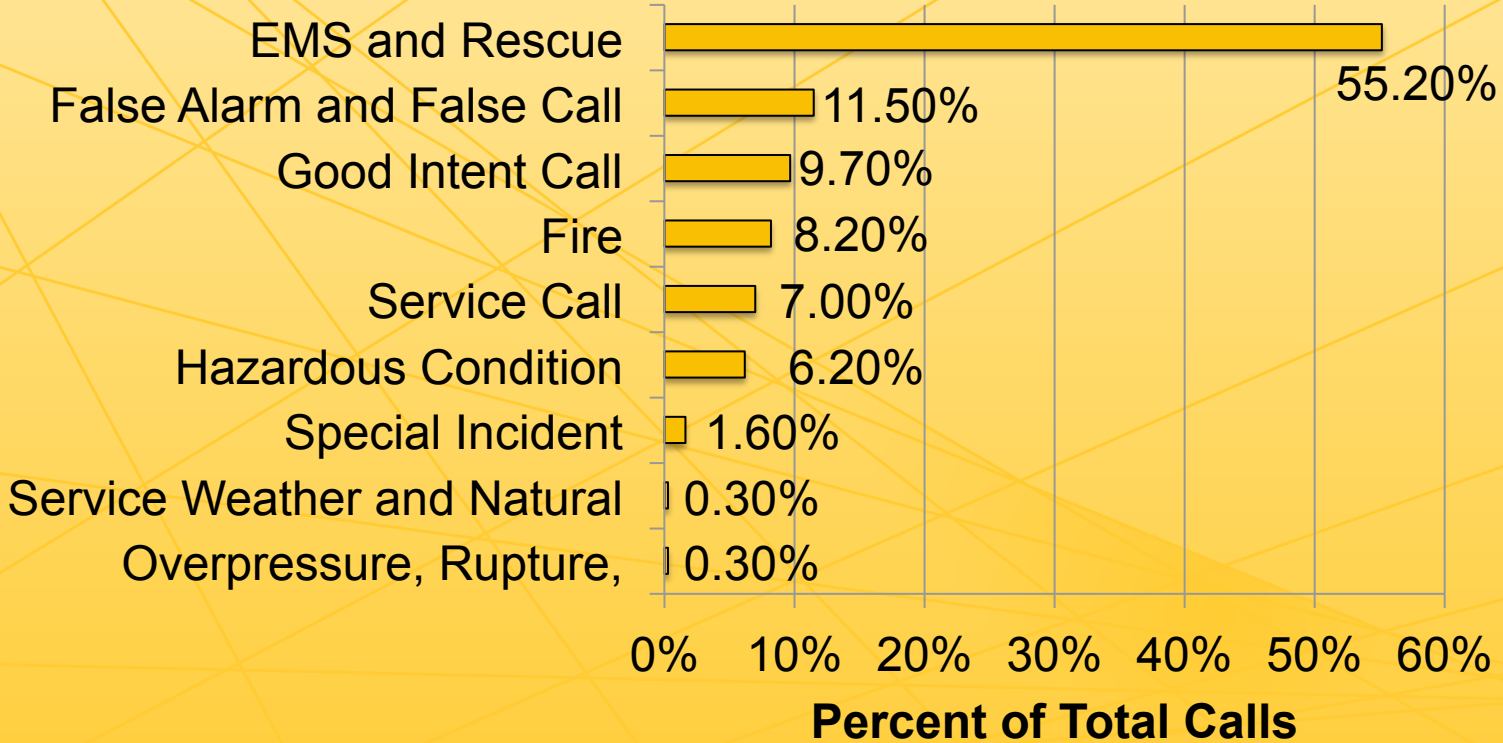


¹ U.S. Fire Administration, 2014

Nationwide Types of calls

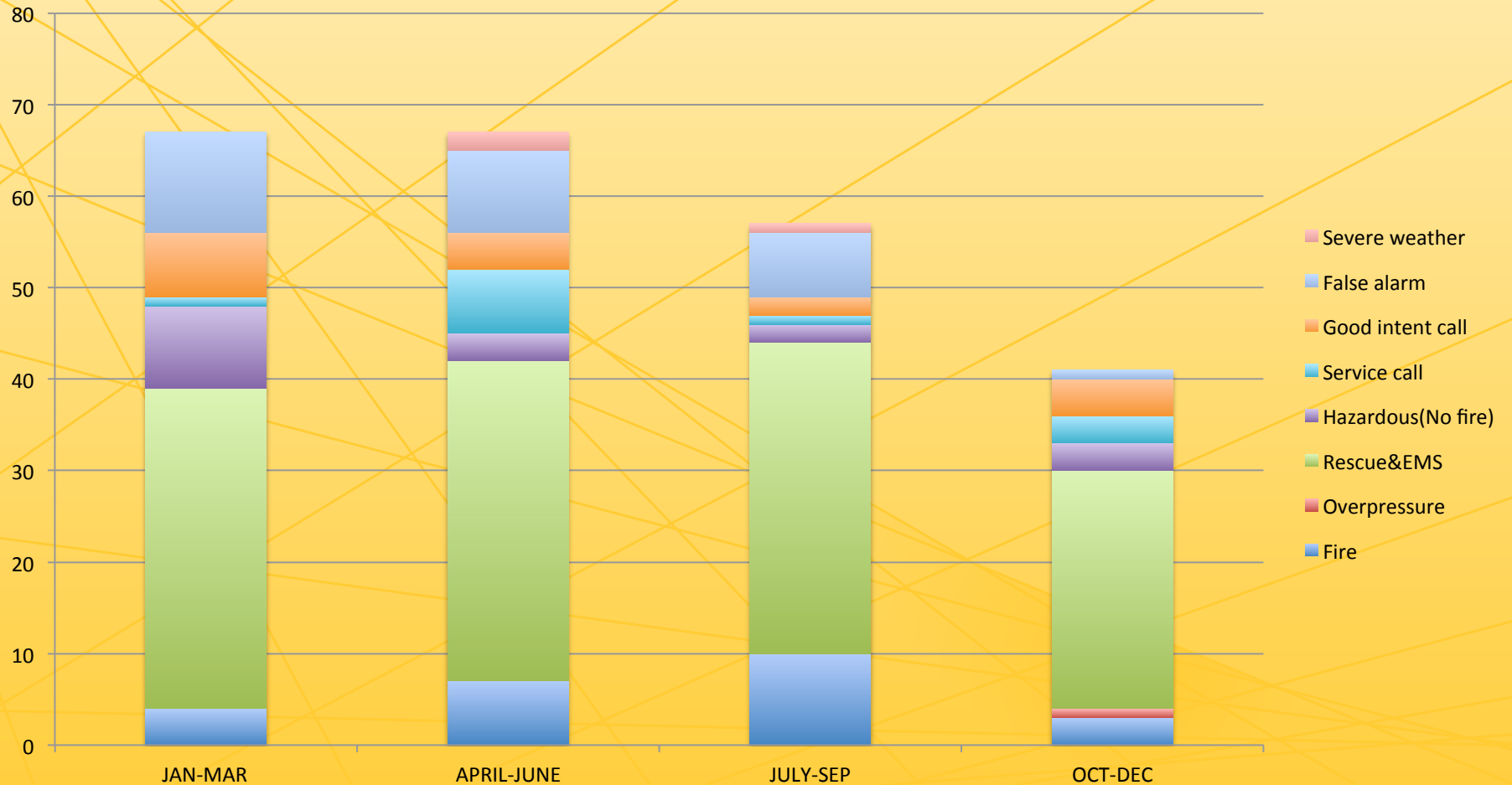
Fewer than 10% of fire department runs are fires.

1



¹ Fire Department Overall Run Profile, 2004

2014 Victoria Calls



Some Issues¹

- The number of volunteer firefighters in the United States has declined significantly since 1986(1986: 808,200->2013: 786,150)¹
- Fire department call volumes continue to increase(1986:11,890,000->2013:31,644,500)¹

¹Volunteer Fire Service Fact Sheet. National Volunteer Fire Council. 2015



STAFFING

Staffing Standards

- NFPA 1720 for volunteer departments
 - Shall identify minimum requirements to ensure that a sufficient number of people are available to operate safely and effectively
 - Response requirements to structural fires:
 - Suburban areas (500-1000/mi²)
 - Minimum of 10 responders in 10 minutes 80% of the time
 - Urban area (>1,000)
 - Minimum of 15 responders in 9 minutes 90% of the time



Current staffing model

- Paid on call + training
 - Recently upgraded to \$10 from \$8.25
- Pension lump sum after 20 years
 - Recently upgraded to \$3,000/yr from \$2,000/yr
- Every call goes out to all
- Rotating crew specialization
 - Fire crew
 - Medical crew
 - Facility maintenance
 - Equipment maintenance



Current staffing model cont.

- Rotating specializations
 - Fire and Medical companies applies during training/meeting times only
 - Facility/Equipment companies responsible for maintenance
 - Monthly rotation



Duty Crews: What Are They?¹²

- Group of people required to be at the station for a shift
- Responsible for all calls during their shift
- Typically have officer in charge
- Higher cost than current paid-on-call model



Duty Crews: Victoria

- Pros:
 - Quicker response time
 - Predictable schedules
 - Eases call volume burden
 - Eases burden on staffing additional station
 - Reduced risk of injury¹
 - Compliance with OSHA standards²
 - Upkeep of the station in downtime

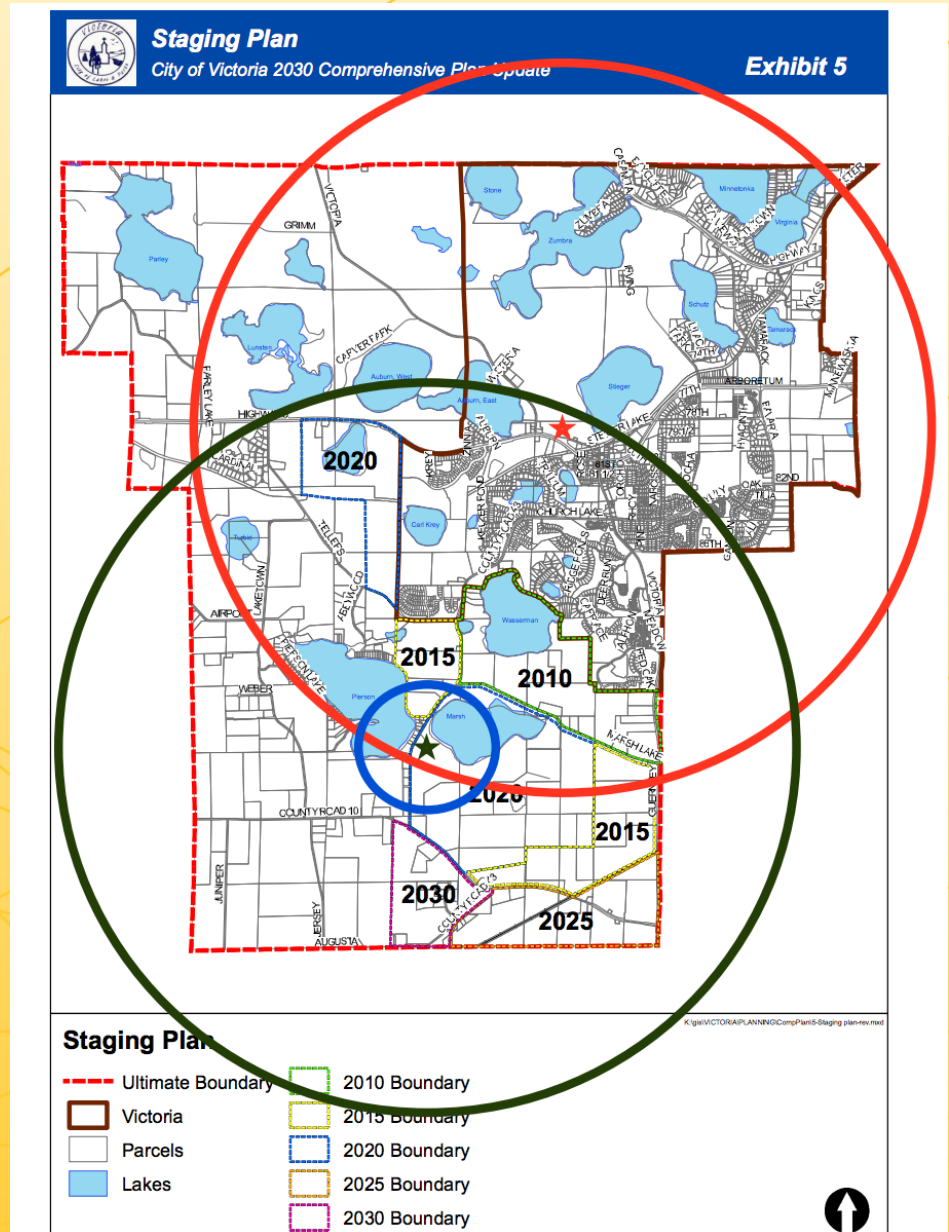
¹Washington Township ²Monday (2000)



Second Station

Red star: Current station

Blue star: Potential 2nd station



Duty Crews: Victoria

- Cons:
 - Expensive
 - May have difficulty filling schedule



Duty Crews: Recommendations

- When to implement:
 - Avg annual cost per volunteer approaches \$1,500 (current ~\$800)
 - Particular times with disproportionate amount of calls
 - Realistically, about 5-10 years

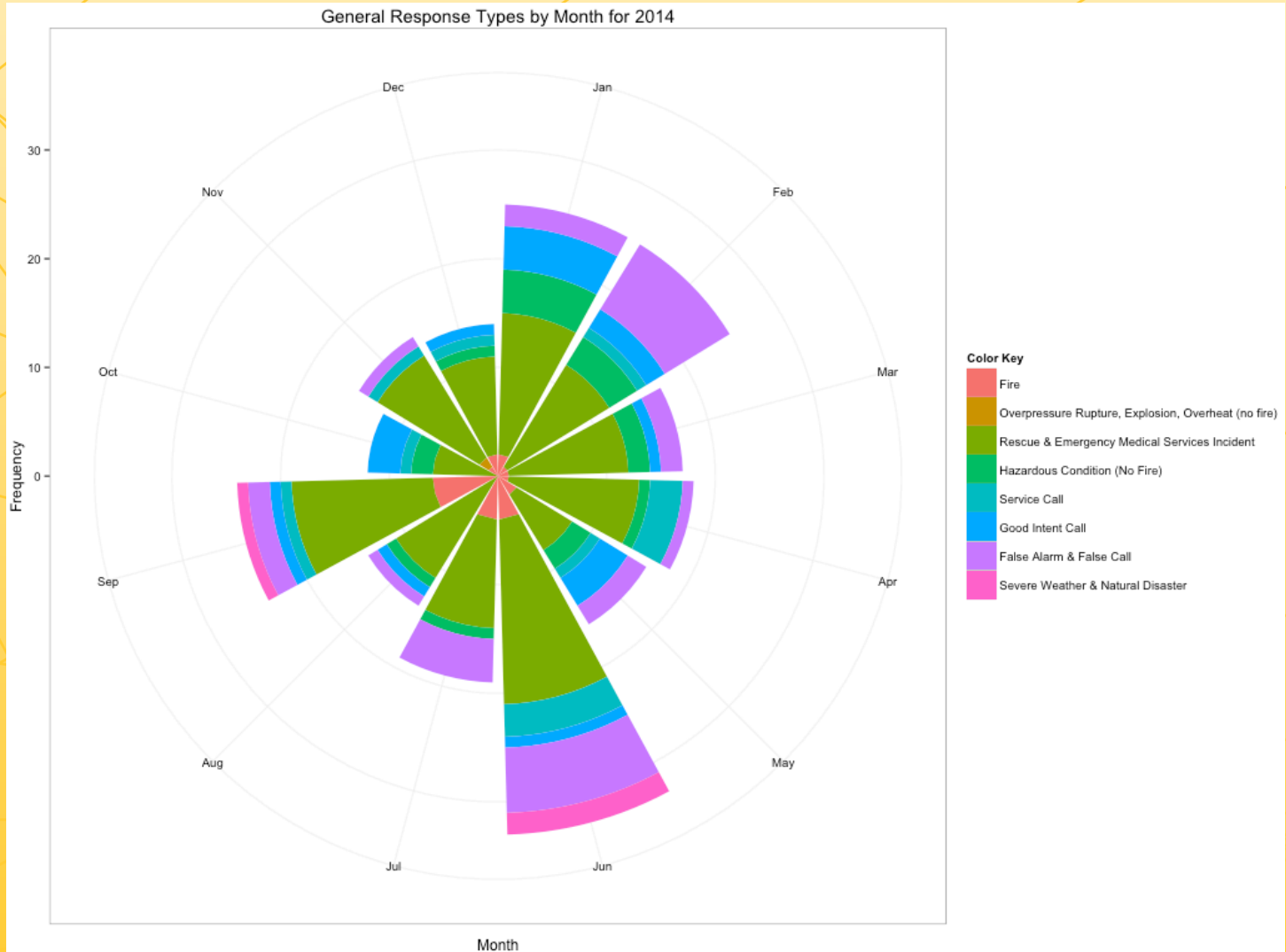


Duty Crews: Recommendations

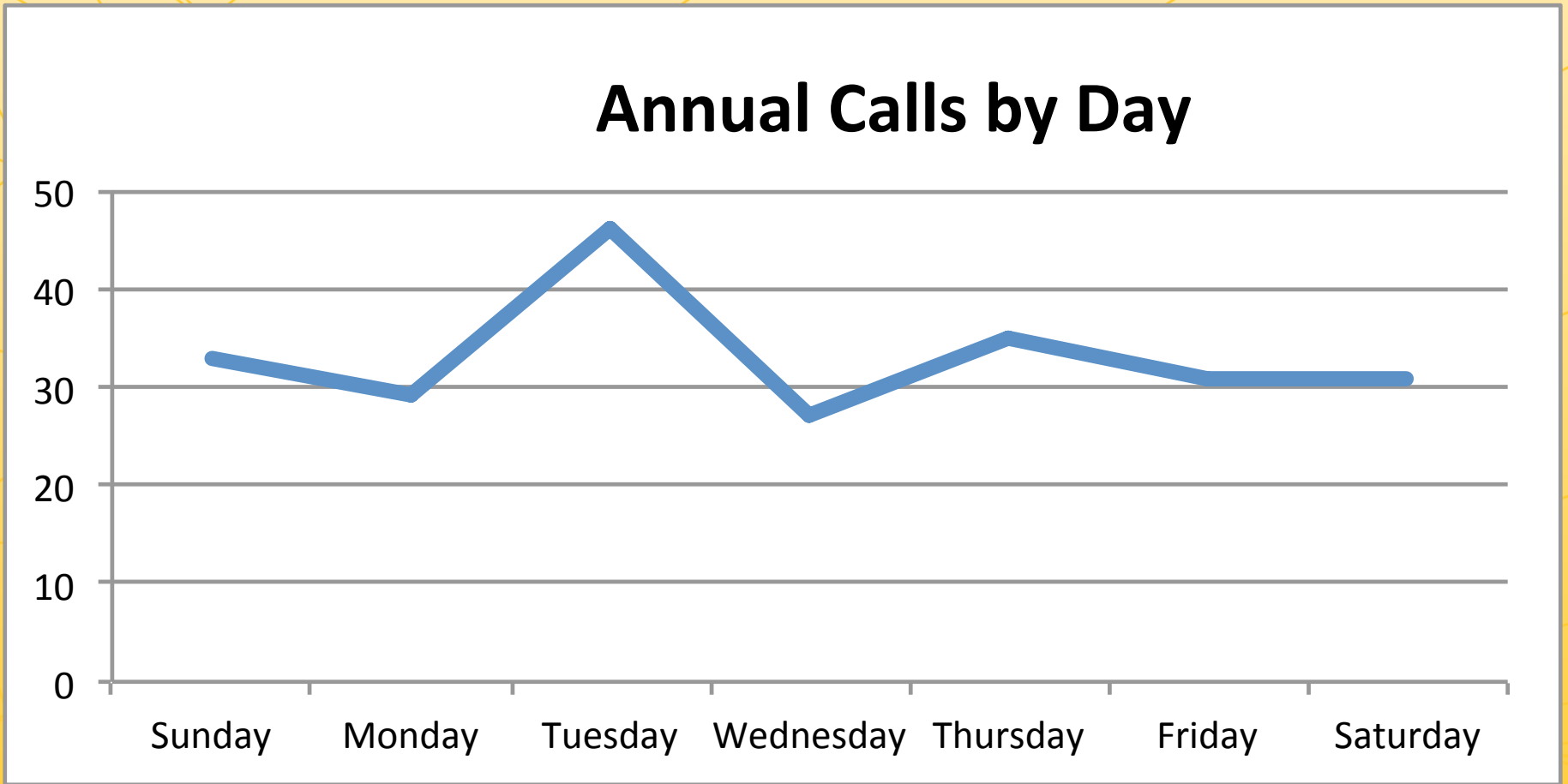
- How to implement:
 - Shifts from a month to month basis (see chart)
 - Target particular windows of time (see graphs)
- Take volunteers for shifts
- Offer non-monetary incentives to volunteers
 - Providing meals
 - Additional training for downtime



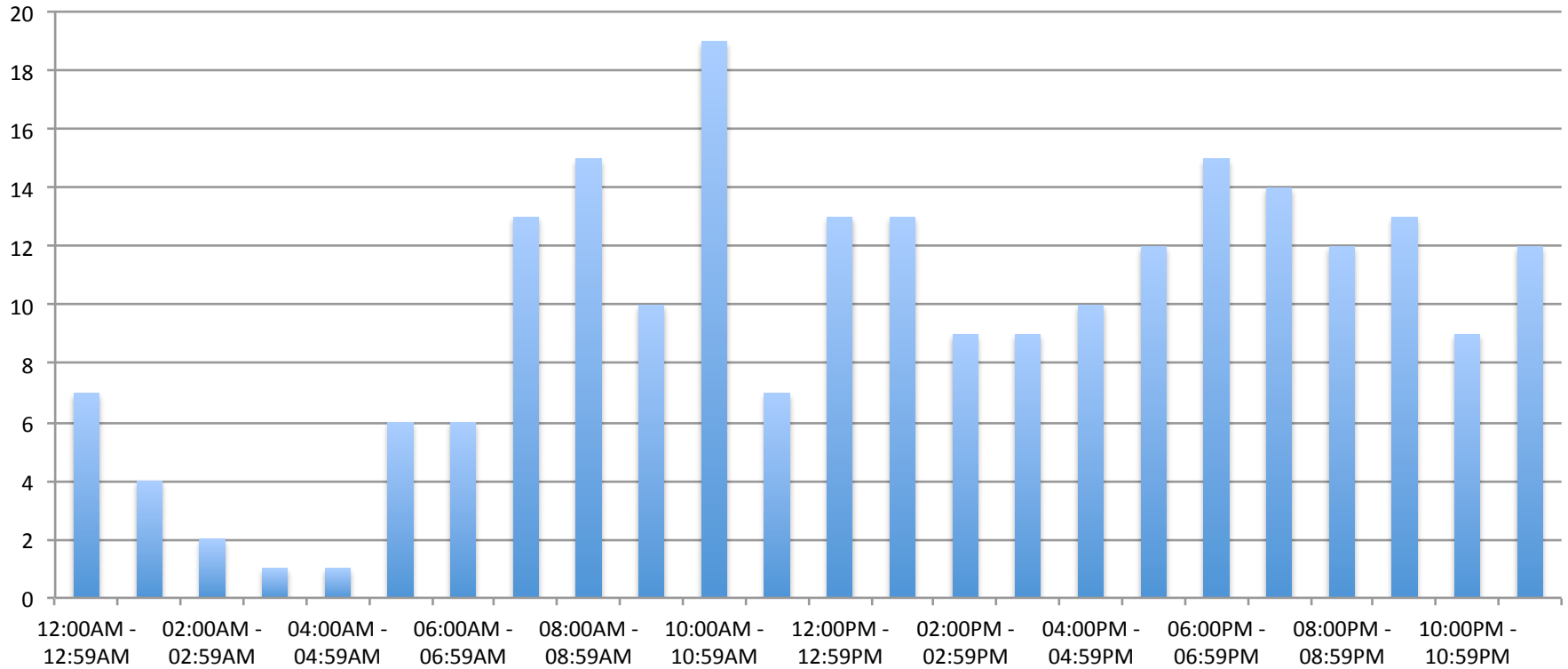
Duty Crews: Victoria



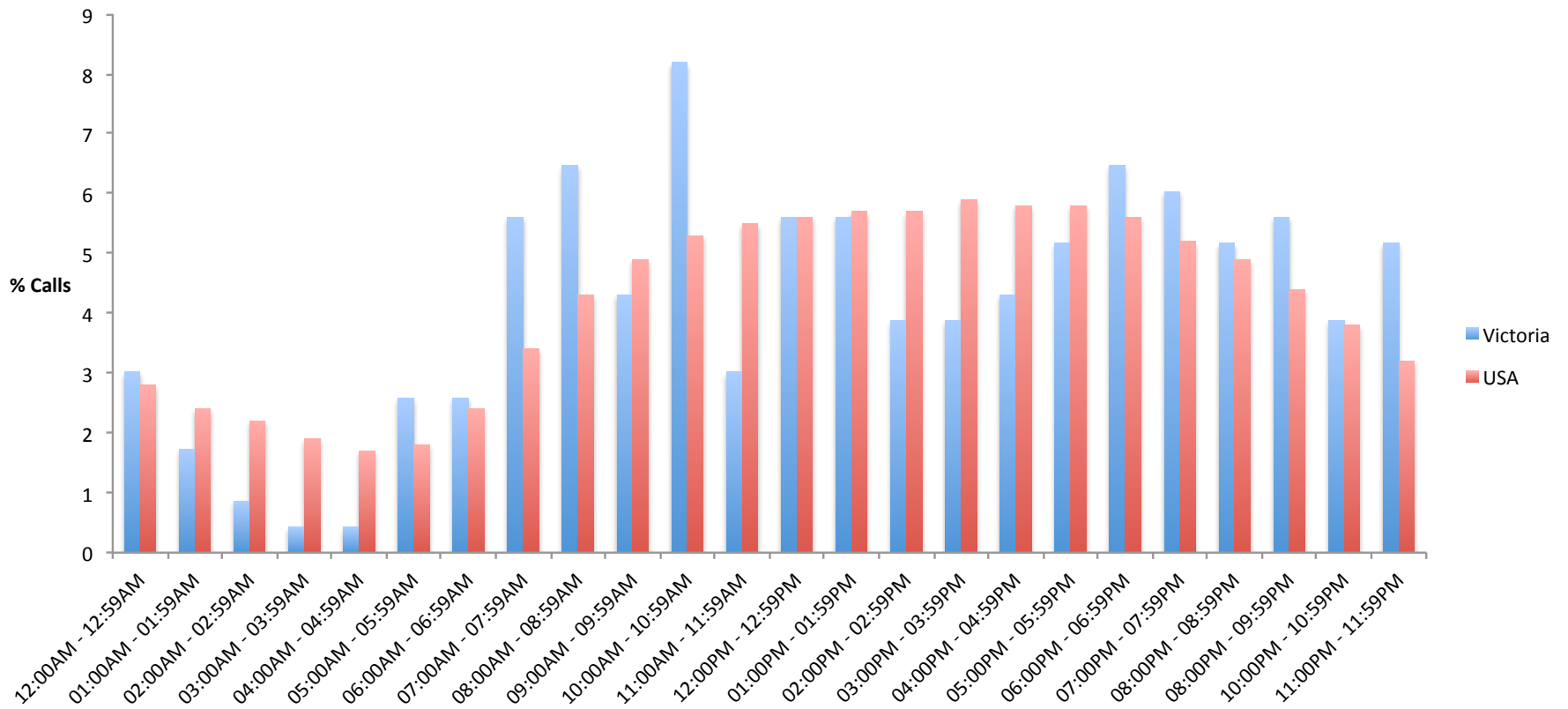
Duty Crews: Victoria



Calls by 1 Hour Intervals

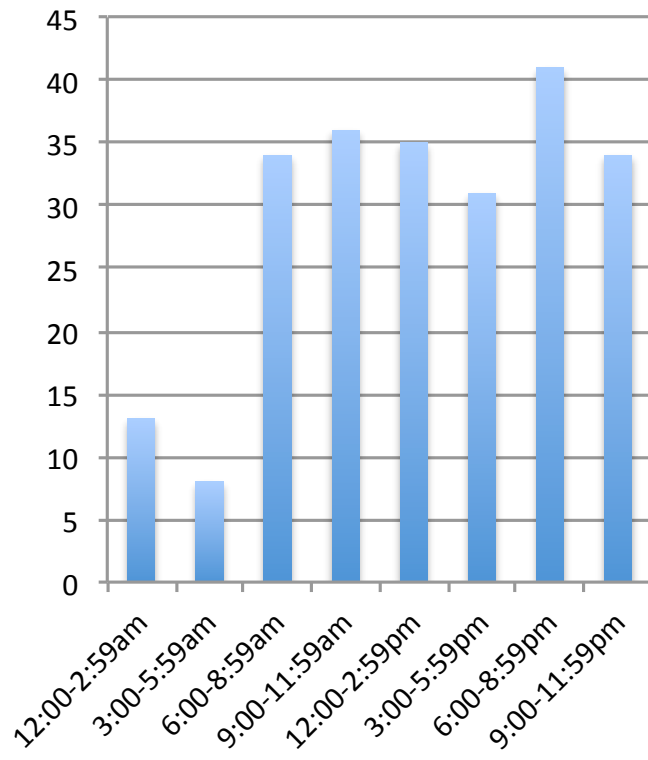


% Calls by 1 Hour Interval

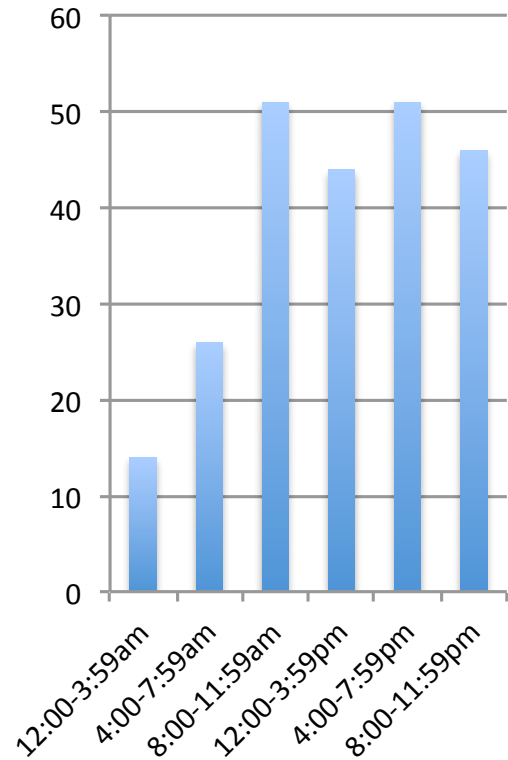


Duty Crews: Victoria

Calls by 3 Hour Intervals



Calls by 4 Hour Intervals



Specialization: What is it?¹

- Volunteers fill a niche
 - E.g., structural fires, EMS, HAZMAT, special rescue, etc.
 - Can train in multiple roles, not confined to one
- Can be emergency response niche
 - E.g., medical calls, fire calls
- Can be non-response niche
 - E.g., event coordinator, social media specialist

Specialization: Victoria

- Pros:
 - Cheaper than duty crew
 - Aids in retention
 - Ease time commitment burden
 - Aids in recruitment
 - Able to hire more diverse people
 - Less required training for proficiency
 - Already have mini specialization program in place

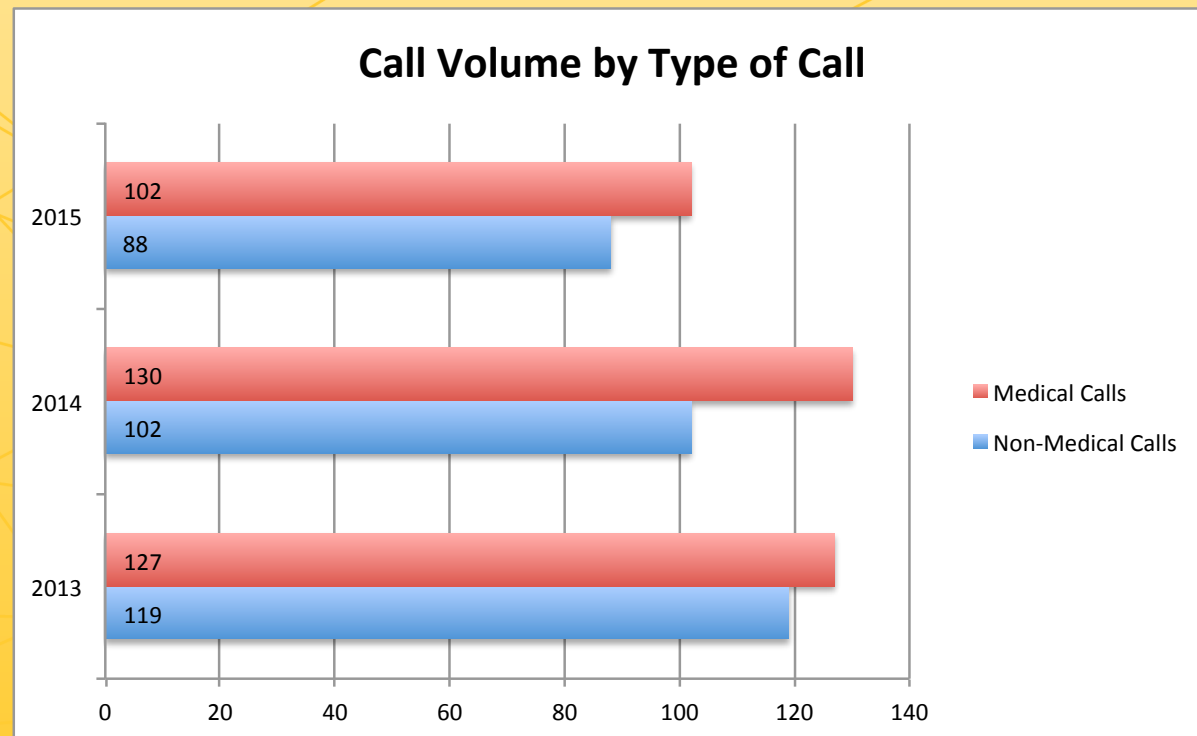
Specialization: Victoria

- Cons
 - Fewer people get called
 - Greater expectation to show up on scene
 - Difficult to implement
 - May divide department



Specialization: Recommendation

- For future consideration
- Two specializations:
 - Medical
 - All others
- Online training



Specialization: Recommendation for Victoria¹

- Already has rotating specialization teams, well received
- As call volume increases:
 - Specialization will reduce total number of calls each individual receives
 - Is a cheaper alternative to duty crews
 - Can still send calls to all for major calls

Gear bags

- FF issued duffle bag with their gear
- Three new options
 - Everybody responsible for transportation of their own gear for every call
 - Only people working/living far away responsible for their own gear
 - Gear stored on apparatus/truck



Personal transportation

- Pros:
 - Cuts down on time spent travelling to home station
 - Respond to calls faster
- Cons:
 - Potential to lose/mishandle gear
 - Forgetting gear at home
 - Less people stopping by home station first
 - Putting on gear in the winter that was stored in a trunk

Bringing gear to the scene

- Pros:
 - Gear kept at station, less responsibility on individuals
 - One person can transport all the gear
 - People working/living far away can still reach the scene faster
- Cons:
 - Takes valuable compartment space
 - Extra vehicle required on scene if kept in a van/truck



Recommendation

- Turnout gear stored on an apparatus/van and transported to the scene
- Most useful with full time chief
 - Already at the station to drive gear vehicle to the scene



Non-Active/Support Staff

- Intern
- Auxiliary groups
- Support staff
- As needed basis



Intern

- Opportunities for local youth to donate their time
- Help out with variety of non-emergency tasks
 - Public outreach
 - Event coordination
 - Equipment inspection
- Nearby high schools and colleges

Intern

- Example¹ of Californian intern program

Intern - Starting Spring 2014, Alta will be starting a new Intern Program to assist with station staffing during the week when our volunteer firefighters are generally out of the district for their full-time jobs. Initially working one to four 10-hour shifts (8 am to 6 pm) a month, Interns will be expected to respond to emergencies, assist with station and apparatus maintenance, training, public education and inspections. Qualifying interns will have completed an approved Firefighter I Academy, as well as Basic First Aid, and hold a current CPR card. A valid Class C driver's license is also required. Advanced training will be offered in lieu of stipend. This is a perfect opportunity for those seeking to obtain their service time to meet the California State Fire Marshal's Firefighter I certification requirement and advance their career in the fire service.

- “...assist with station and apparatus maintenance, training, public education...”

Auxiliary Groups

- Significant others of current volunteers
- Provide behind-the-scenes support to department
 - Cooking during training nights
 - Fundraising
 - Supporting families of volunteers



Administrative support staff

- Aid with:
 - Budgeting
 - Policy
 - Recruitment
 - Coordination
 - Support
 - Fundraising
- Eases burden on current officers/chief



Volunteers as needed

- Recruit volunteers separately for major events
 - Open house
- Not an ongoing obligation
- Can recruit volunteers from other organizations without poaching their members



Staffing Recommendations

- Duty crews:
 - Recommended for future implementation
- Specialization:
 - Implement with online training
 - Otherwise, may be too burdensome to develop + provide specialized training
 - Can be used in conjunction with duty crews
- Turnout gear:
 - Helpful only if NFPA standard not met
- Support staff:
 - Ready to implement now



RECRUITING

Background:

VFD's Current Practices

- Began focusing on recruiting around 2001
 - Experienced a dip in membership in 2012
- Multiple forms of advertisements
 - Banners, fliers, newspaper ads, truck magnets, City's Facebook page
- Visibility in the community
 - Community involvement, use of antique truck



Background: Criteria to Apply

- Requirements:
 - At least 18 years old
 - High school diploma or equivalent
 - Live *or work* within 10 minutes of the station
 - Pass an annual physical assessment
 - Have a valid driver's license

Background:

Application Process for VFD

- Steps in the process:
 - Application form
 - Structured panel interview
 - Background check
 - Physical examination
 - Physical agility test
 - Also done as an annual requirement
- Typically 4-7 applicants per year (~75% SR)



Community Engagement



Victoria FD (n.d)
1929 Chevy pumper
(Restored in 2001 thanks to fundraising)



City of Victoria (2015)
July community involvement

Community Engagement



City of Victoria (2015)
Santa arrives at City Hall
in a Fire truck



City of Victoria (2014)
VFRA Fishing Contest

Promotion and Recruiting



City of Victoria (2014)
VFD at "Discover Victoria"



City of Victoria (2015)
Search and rescue training

Recruiting as “Selling”

- Recruiting volunteers is similar to “selling” an opportunity¹
 - Strategies used in other businesses are also relevant for volunteer FDs
- Recruiting also benefits from social exchange principles¹
 - Minimize costs and maximize benefits of interacting

¹Snook, Johnson, & Olsen (1998)



Considerations For Recruiting

1. Motivations
2. Offerings
3. Competitors
4. Differentiating characteristics
5. Marketing
6. Helping interested parties decide whether to apply

1) Motivations

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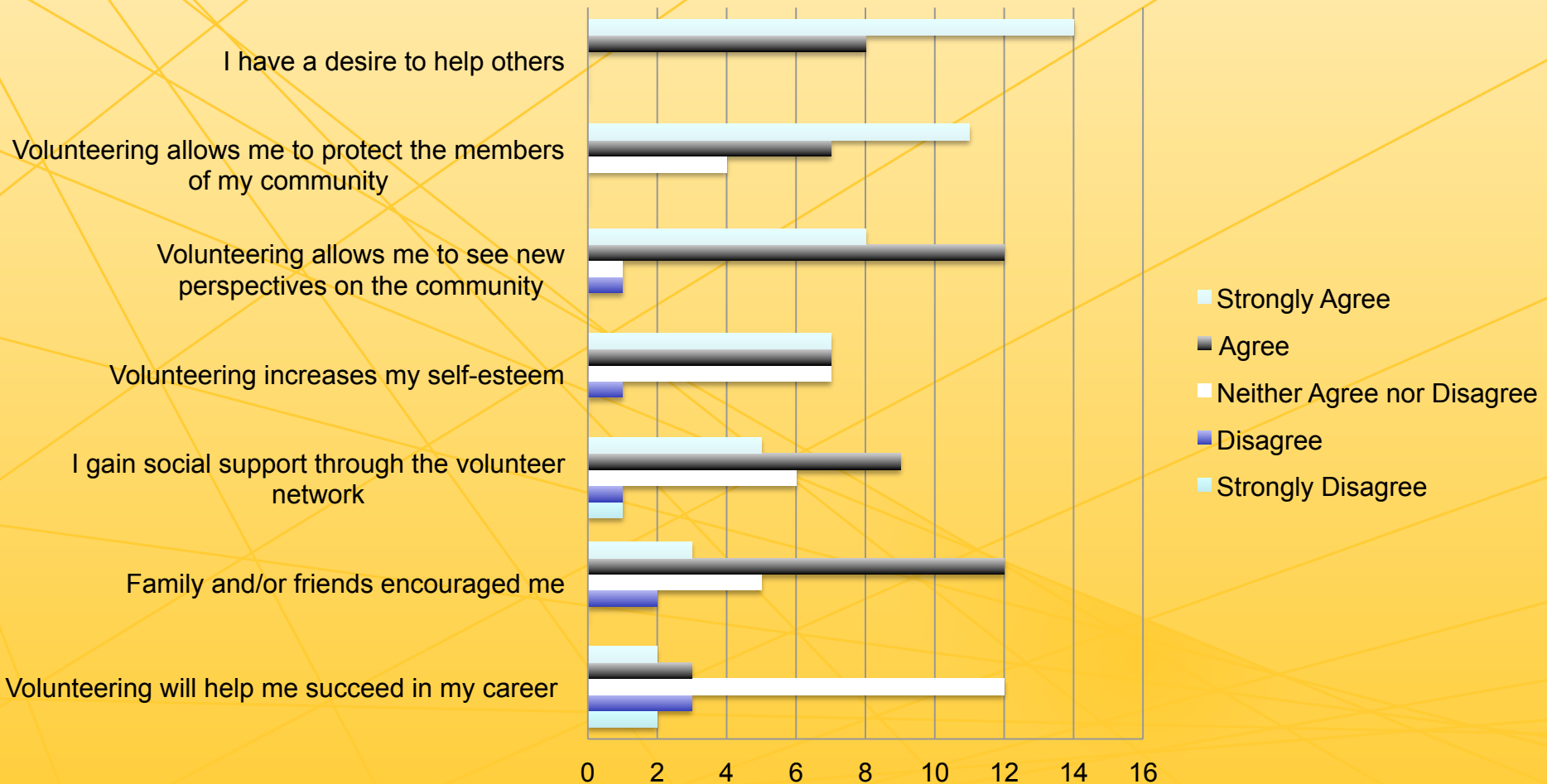
- Common motivations for joining FDs:
 - Help the community ^{1,2,3}
 - Help those in need ^{1,2,3}
 - Take on challenges ^{2,3}
 - Belong to something important ²
 - Influence of friends, neighbors, family ^{2,3}
- General motivation:
 - Meet needs that go unmet in regular jobs³

¹Campbell & Ones et al. (2015); ²Shrader (n.d.);

³Snook et al. (1998)



Motivations for Joining



Top 5 Reasons for Volunteering

Reason	Average
I feel it is important to help others.	6.45
Being a volunteer firefighter lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience.	6.36
I feel compassion toward people in need.	6.18
I am doing something for a cause that is important to me.	6.09
I explore my own strengths through volunteer firefighting tasks.	6.00

“Why do some people *not* volunteer?”

Reason	Count
Time	14
Training	3
Scared/intimidated/uncomfortable	3
Not interested in FD	3
Disorganization / conflicting information	1
Work-Life Balance	1
Misunderstanding of demands	1
Not aware of the opportunity	1

2) Offerings

2) VFD's Offerings

- Meaningful challenges
- Pride from serving one's community¹
- Satisfaction of helping those in need¹
- Development of new knowledge and skills¹
- Social opportunities¹
- Hourly wages¹
- Retirement fund¹
- Quarterly salary (officers only)¹



Highlight Intrinsic Rewards

- Recommendation: Highlight intrinsic rewards in ads and testimonials
 - Make sure that the non-monetary rewards are clear to recruits
 - Make clear matches between motivations and FD's offerings



3) Competitors

3) Competitors

- There are nearly limitless volunteer options
- A search of VolunteerMatch.org returned just short of a thousand *local* (< 20 mi) options

We've found 952 volunteer opportunities

near  Victoria, MN 

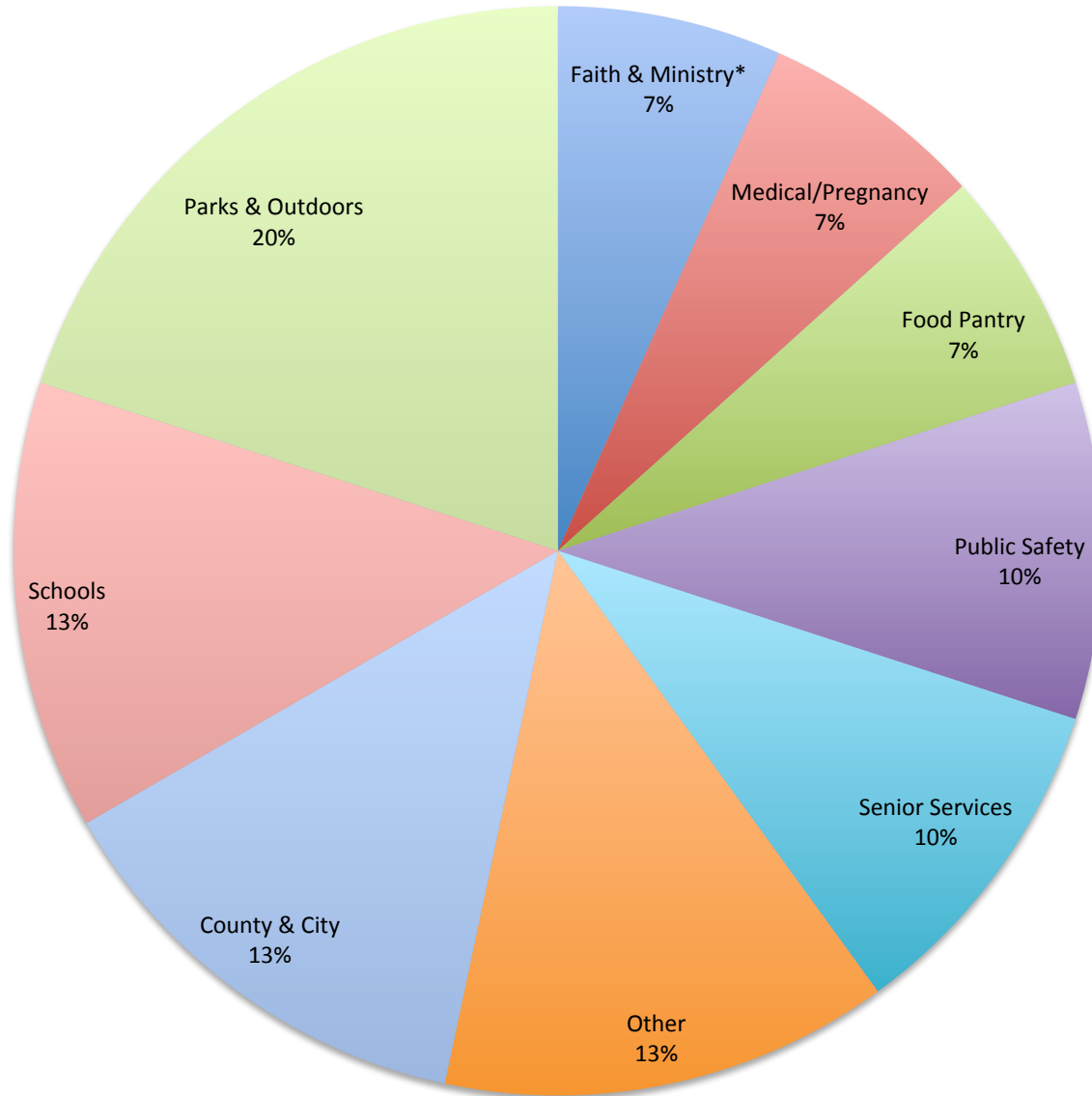
- Many thousands more are available remotely

3) Competitors

- 24 volunteer options in and around Victoria¹
 - Listed by the Victoria For A Lifetime Committee
- Other opportunities not listed by VFAL:
 - Carver-Scott Master Recycler-Composters
 - Local churches and faith-oriented groups
 - E.g., The Blessing House

¹Victoria For A Lifetime (2013)

Victoria/Carver County Volunteering



4) Differentiating Characteristics

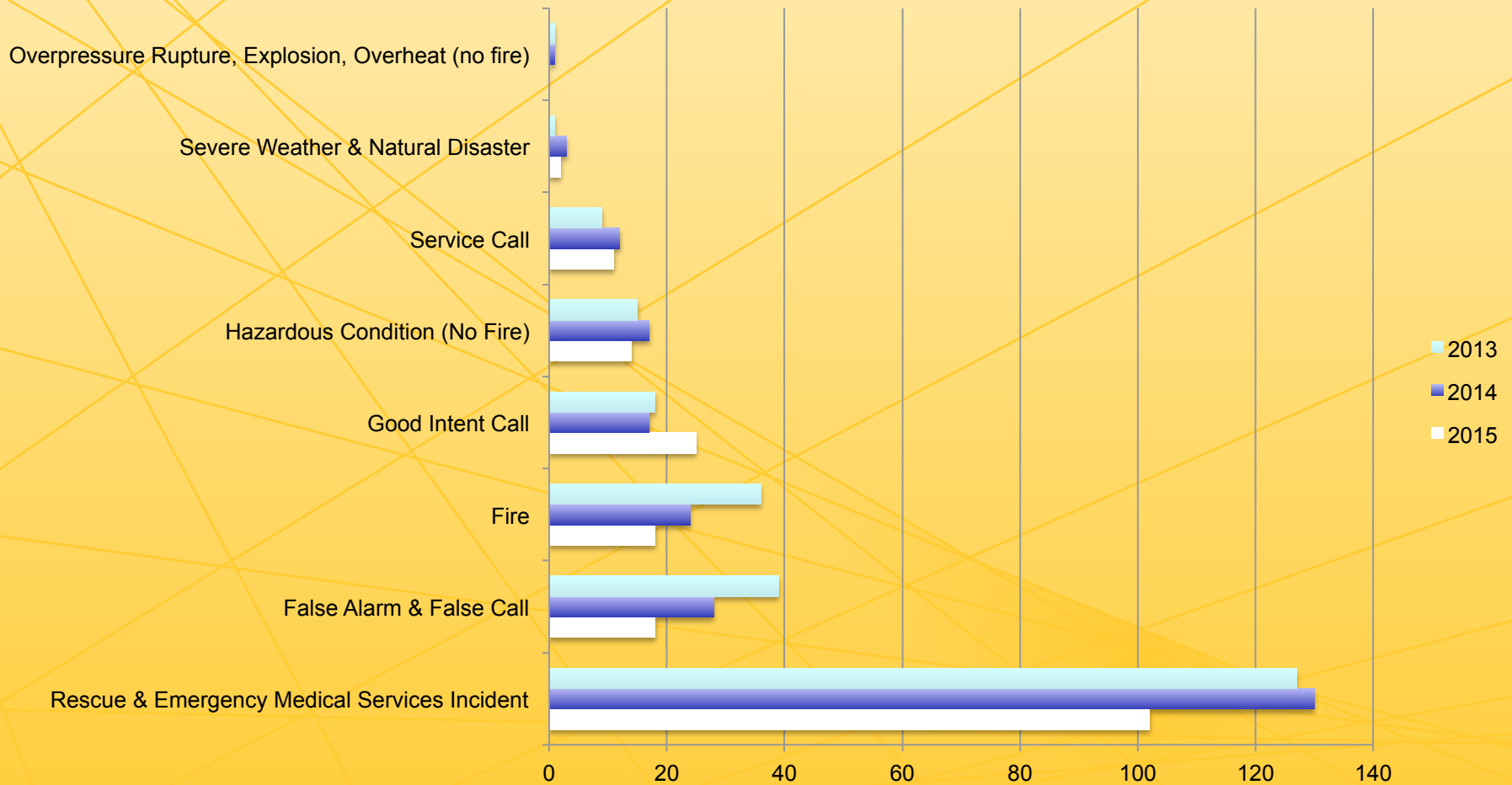


4) VFD's Differentiators

- Some things that set VFD apart:
 - Protecting residents and their property
 - Call-based work
 - One of only 3 public safety volunteer options
 - Others:
 - Sheriff's Office Reserves
 - Medical Reserve Corps



Summary of Calls



Focus on What Sets VFD Apart

- Recommendations:
 - Convey the true nature of the job by highlighting frequent call types
 - Correct misconceptions
 - Give appropriate emphasis to the tasks
 - Focus on the aspects of the job that match with motivations that go unsatisfied elsewhere
 - E.g., protecting others, being there to provide help



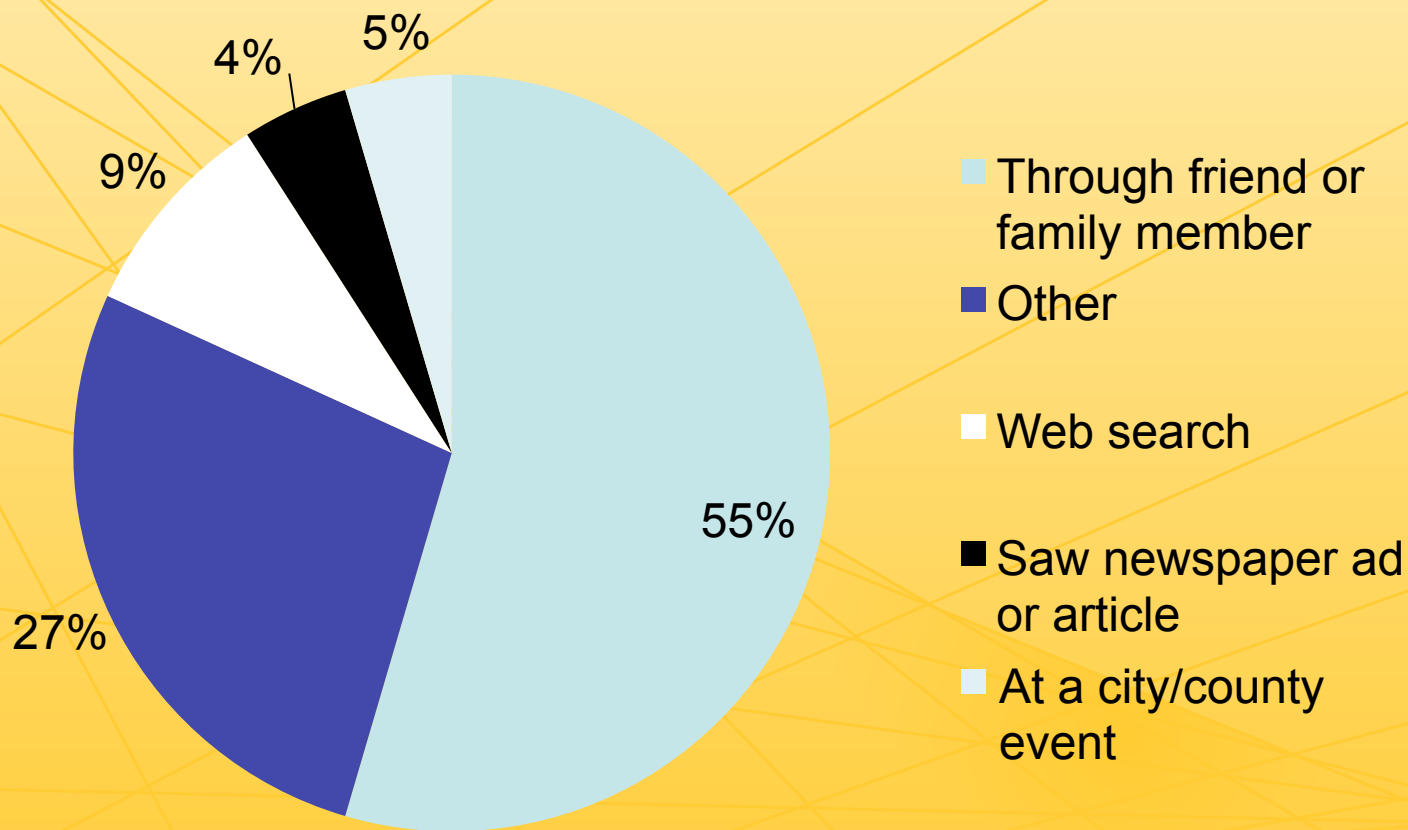
5) Marketing

5) Marketing

- Four main types of marketing:

Mode of Contact	Type of Message	
	General	Specific
Via Media	Publicizing	Advertising
In Person	Promoting	Personal Selling*

“How did you originally find out about this volunteer opportunity?”



Personal Recruiting

- Two Approaches:
 - “Each one, reach one” yearly campaigns¹
 - On-going personal recruiting^{2,3,4}
- Receiving a personal invitation is one of the most-cited reasons for volunteering^{1,2}
 - Personal invitations are meaningful^{2,5}
- Referral is a bi-directional vetting process

¹USFA, FEMA, & NVFC (2007); ²Smolsky (2000); ³CFCA & VWS (2013); ⁴VFCA & VWS (n.d.); ⁵Bernard (2015);



Employee Referrals

- Benefits of referrals:
 - Cost effective^{1,2}
 - Better performance^{1,2,3}
 - Function of ability, mentoring, and pressure
 - Better credentials³
 - Short interest-to-hire time^{1,2}
 - Longer tenure^{1,2}

¹Cascio & Aguinis (2004); ²SHRM(2001);

³Breaugh (2013)



Involve Everyone in Recruiting

- Recruitment coordinator^{1,2,3}
 - Spearheads recruitment efforts (extroverted)
- Recruitment committee¹
 - A subset of volunteers form a committee to assist the recruitment coordinator
- All members^{1,4,5}
 - Everyone carries the responsibility of marketing the departments' opportunities

¹USFA, FEMA, & NVFC (2007); ²CFCA & VWS (2013);

³VFCA & VWS (n.d.); ⁴Smolsky (2000); ⁵Mallick (1998)



5) Marketing

Personal Selling

- Recommendations:
 - View every firefighter as a recruiter
 - Use one-on-one recruiting^{1,2,3,4}
 - Train members on recruiting skills²
 - Maintain consistency of the department's brand¹
 - Institute a referral program

¹Snook et al. (1998); ²Smolsky (2000);

³Bernard (2015); ⁴USFA (2007)



City of Victoria Employees

- Recommendation: Recruit from within Victoria's municipal workforce¹
- Benefits of city-worker volunteers:
 - Automatically meet the requirement of living or working in Victoria
 - Reliably in Victoria during the daytime
 - Less concern about employer's support of volunteer firefighting

¹Kline (1998)

Features in the City Newsletter



PHOTO BY MELISSA SHINE

Firefighter Jason Hukriede offering a chance to see the inside of a Fire Truck at the Fire Department Open House to a young and avid fan of fire trucks!

Victoria Fire Department

Many people are surprised to learn that the Victoria Fire Department is not comprised of full-time employees. The Department operates under a Paid-On-Call model, where members are paid an hourly rate for training and calls, while also earning credit to become eligible for a retirement program through PERA. The Fire Department is made up of your friends and neighbors, most of whom also have a full-time career and family obligations, and dedicate themselves to our community in their off hours. The Department trains most Monday evenings, and each member is expected to respond to a minimum of 25% of calls each quarter.

In addition to life safety and emergency response, the Fire Department is very involved in the community. Each year, they sponsor the Ice Fishing Contest in February

and the Fire Department Open House in October. You can meet their members at the Classic Cars events in the summer, where they proudly show off the restored 1929 Chevrolet Pumper. They are on hand to pass out candy at Halloween and deliver Santa Claus safely to Christmas in Victoria.

The City of Victoria is deeply grateful for the men and women that offer their time and talents to provide this effective and efficient service to our community. Thank you, Victoria Fire Department!

For more information on how you can get involved with this rewarding experience, please contact Assistant Chief Aaron Jurek at ajurek@ci.victoria.mn.us. No experience is necessary – all equipment, certifications, and training are provided. You'll even be paid for your time during training!



The Victoria Fire Department attends the Victoria Lions and VBA Halloween for Kids event on October 23, 2015

Publicity via Facebook



City of Victoria, MN

October 1, 2014 · 🌟

On Saturday, October 4th the Victoria Fire Department will be holding its annual open house. Please join us from 10:30am-2:00pm for fire safety information, a fire sprinkler demonstration, vehicle extrication and many more events. Lunch will also be provided compliments of the Victoria House.

👍 Like

💬 Co



City of Victoria, MN

November 1, 2014 · 🌟

Please use daylight savings time as a reminder to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. This will help ensure the detectors will properly function in an emergency.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



City of Victoria, MN

August 12, 2014 · 🌟

Please join the Victoria Firefighters this Saturday, August 16th, for the annual bed races in downtown Victoria. The races begin at 5:30 PM. Beds are available for teams to rent and registration is taken the day of the event. This event is part of Volksfest, sponsored by the Victoria Business Owners Association.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Subtle Recruiting Messages

 **City of Victoria, MN** shared a link.
August 18, 2014 · 🌟



The Disappearing Volunteer Firefighter
The allure of the life fades as fund-raising and medical calls intrude on the primary duty: Putting water on fire.
NYTIMES.COM | BY IAN URBINA

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Direct Recruiting Messages



City of Victoria, MN

October 5, 2014 · ✨

Interested in joining the Victoria Fire Department? Please join us Wednesday, October 8th at 7:00 PM for an informational session at the Victoria Fire Station.

👍 Like

💬 Comment



City of Victoria, MN

March 9, 2014 · ✨

The Victoria Fire Department is currently seeking individuals who are interested in becoming a paid on call firefighter. This rewarding position is a great way for you to give back to your community, learn new skills and become part of a hardworking team. Individuals must live or work within ten minutes of the Victoria Fire Station, complete an application process and be willing to devote approximately four to six hours a week to the department. If this sounds like something that interests you, please join us Wednesday April 2nd at 7pm for an informational session at the Victoria Fire Station.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

Social Media Presence

- Recommendations:
 - Create dedicated VFD accounts on Facebook and Twitter
 - Inform, educate, share, and advertise
 - Interact with city's accounts to get more visibility
 - Use a social-media management tool to make posting easier and less time consuming
 - Low-cost tools exist for managing multiple accounts
 - e.g., \$10 per month for Hootsuite
 - Schedule posts in advance



Case Example: Bloomington FD's Twitter Account



Bloomington Fire @BFD_MN · Nov 19

Firefighter Tony installing a child safety seat. If you need one installed/checked contact BFD 952-563-4801.



Bloomington Fire @BFD_MN · Nov 23

BFD removing carbon monoxide (CO) from a house due to faulty furnace. Have a working CO detector on every level.



Bloomington Fire @BFD_MN · Dec 5

House fire 5500 block Eliason Dr. Fire is under control no injuries reported.



5) Marketing

Publicizing

- Recommendations:
 - Continue and expand community involvement¹
 - Build social media presence with FD accounts²
 - Seek features in print and video media^{1,2}
 - Regularly share FD information and PSAs^{1,2}

¹Snook et al. (1998); ²Raffel (2013)

Use Branded Images/Messages

- Recommendations:
 - Brand advertisements for look, feel, and message
 - Slogans, themes, inclusive messages, challenges
 - Get feedback about ads from pilot audiences before launching them
 - Represent female firefighters in ads^{1,2}
 - Feature females and pilot test with females

¹Booth & Rohe (1988); Walton, Murphy, & Ryan (2015)



Use the NVFC's Recruiting Site

makemeafirefighter.org

[ABOUT](#) [FOR DEPARTMENTS](#) [CONTACT](#)

**FIND THE
FIGHTER IN YOU**

[WHAT IT TAKES](#)

[WHAT IT'S LIKE](#)

**FIRE DEPARTMENTS
NEED VOLUNTEERS
LIKE YOU**

Seven out of ten firefighters and emergency responders are volunteers. If you have the heart to serve your community, you have everything we need.



Showcase Current Volunteers

- Recommendation: Use recruitment materials featuring current members¹
- Example approaches:
 - Action photos from drills or calls²
 - Spotlight members and their multiple roles^{1,2,3}

¹Mallick (1998); ²USFA, FEMA, & NVFC (2007);

³Ross (2008)



Case Example:

Golden Valley FD's Ad Campaign



Case Example:

Golden Valley FD's Ad Campaign

Meet Golden Valley Firefighter Gregg Prest



***Businessman.
Mountain Climber.
Firefighter.***

At the time he signed up to be an on-call firefighter, Gregg Prest had three young children and some doubts. As the years went by, those doubts vanished. "It was probably one of the best decisions I've made for what I've done with my life," he says.

A small business owner and an occasional mountain climber, Prest is no stranger to adventurous living. But becoming a firefighter, he says, was just a straightforward practical choice. Looking back, he's glad he confronted his initial doubts.

"The Fire Department introduced me to a circle of friends I wouldn't have met otherwise, and the physical elements have kept me sharp," he explains. "It forced me to stay fit and young."

5) How can VFD market?

Advertising

- Recommendations:
 - Post via VFD social media accounts¹
 - Use branded images and messages¹
 - Pilot test advertising materials
 - Showcase current volunteers in ads^{2,3}
 - Feature female firefighters in ads⁴
 - Continue banners, posters, fliers, etc.^{1,5}

¹Raffel (2013); ²Mallick (1998); ³Ross (2008);

⁴Booth & Rohe (1988); ⁵Snook et al. (1998)



5) Marketing

Promoting

- Recommendations:
 - Continue appearances at fairs, festivals, etc.¹
 - Offer regular clinics and/or services
 - Examples:
 - Car seat installations
 - Drop-in blood pressure checks

¹Snook et al. (1998)



5) Marketing

- **General recommendations:**
 - Ensure that current members are involved in recruitment^{1,2,3,4}
 - Emphasize personal recruiting
 - Carefully design personal and ad-based recruiting approaches

¹Smolsky (2000); ²Mallick (1998); ³CFCA & VWS (2013); ⁴VFCA & VWS (n.d.)



Big-Picture Recommendation:

County-Wide Consortium

- Compete for SAFER-grant funding to facilitate recruiting
 - Available through FEMA and DHS
 - “Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response”
- Establish a centralized recruiting resource¹ for volunteer FDs in Carver county

¹Adams (2013)



Case Example:

Anoka County's SAFER Grant

- Local case example: Anoka County
 - Won a four-year SAFER grant (\$1.1 million)
 - Main focus: Improve recruitment and retention
 - Scope: Administered by one FD, benefits 16 FDs
- General components:
 - Bonuses for recruits (\$500) and referrers (\$100)
 - Training, PPE, and hiring costs
 - Marketing and instructional materials

Case Example: Anoka County's SAFER Grant



Case Example:

Anoka County's SAFER Grant

www.mnfirehire.com



REQUIREMENTS

CULTURE

MEDIA

DEPARTMENTS

RESOURCES

BLOG

THE ELITE CITIZEN RESPONDER

If not you, then who?

[BECOME A FIREFIGHTER >](#)

6) Helping interested parties decide whether to apply

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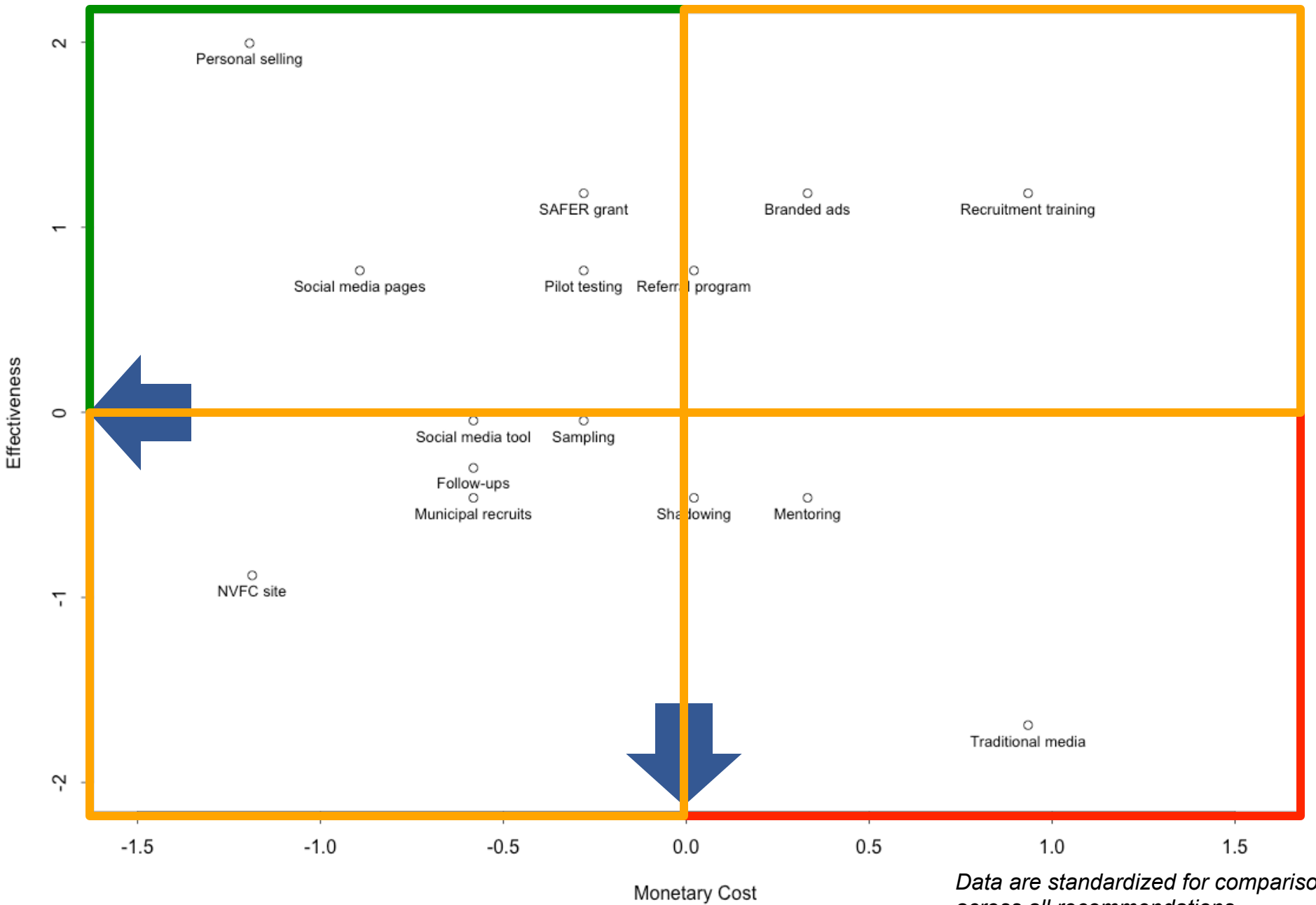
- Practices to continue:
 - Informational nights & realistic previews
 - Social exchange benefits¹ and staffing advantages²
 - Personal follow-ups³
- Recommendations:
 - Shadowing
 - Videos^{4,5}, sampling³, and simulations
 - Mentoring at all levels^{6,7,8}

¹Ganzach et al. (2002); ²Premack & Wanous (1985); ³Bernard (2015);
⁴Raffel (2013); ⁵USFA, FEMA, & NVFC (2007); ⁶CFCA & VWS (2013);
⁷VFCA & VWS (n.d.); ⁸Marohl (2002)



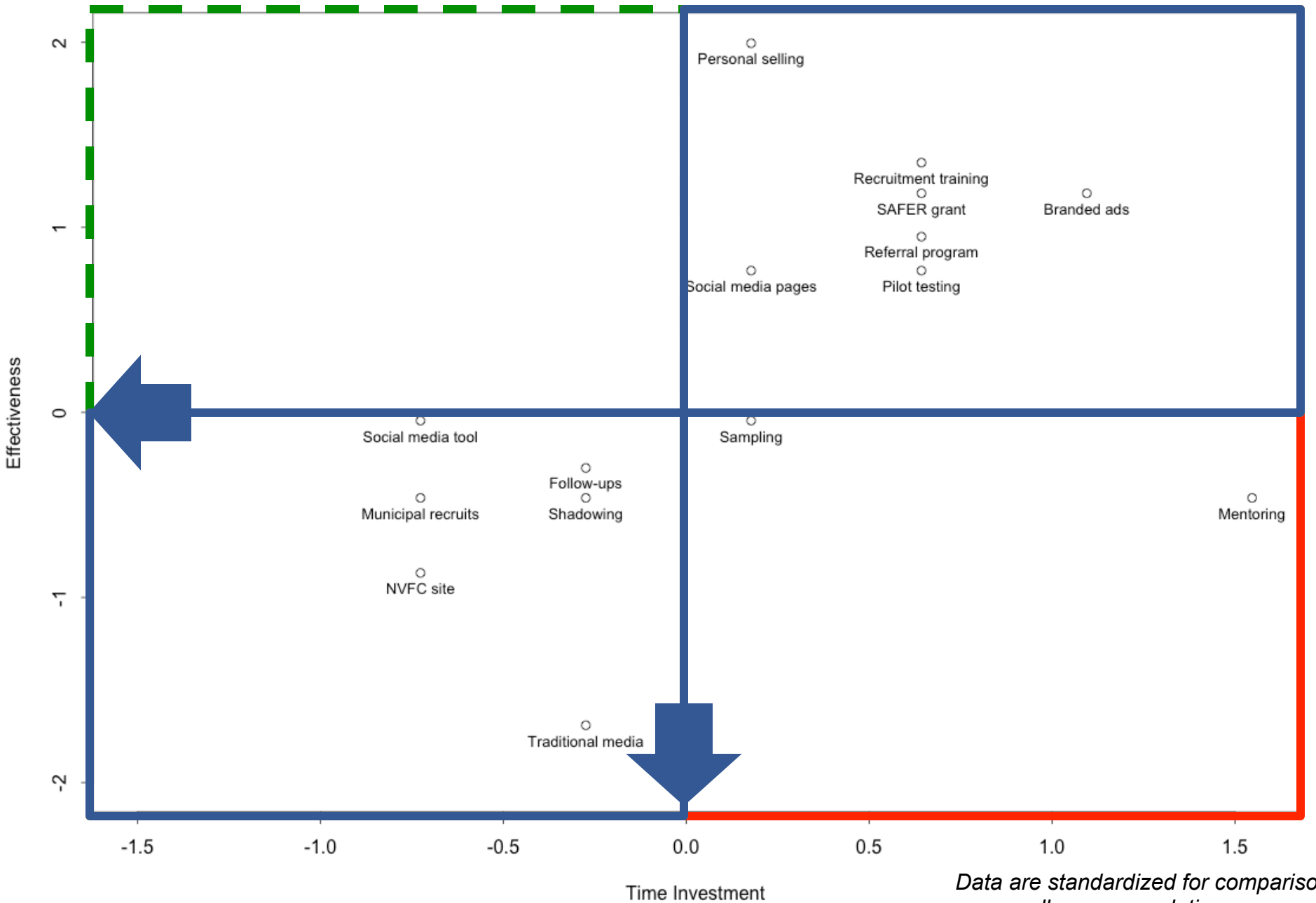
Recruiting Summary

Cost and Effectiveness of Recommendations



Data are standardized for comparison across all recommendations.

Time Investment and Effectiveness of Recommendations



Data are standardized for comparison across all recommendations.

Top Recruiting Recommendations

1. Encourage personal recruiting
 2. Train volunteers in personal recruiting
 3. Use VFD social media accounts
 4. Create branded ads
 5. Pilot test ads
 6. Institute a referral program
 7. Use a social media tool to manage activity
- *Big picture:* Compete for SAFER grant



Timing of Implementation

Current Practice	Ready for Use	Near Future	Down the Road
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditional media• Follow-ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal selling*• Social media pages*• NVFC site• Shadowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruitment training*• Branded ads*• Pilot testing*• Social media manager tool*• Municipal recruits• Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referral program*• Mentoring• SAFER grant

* Top recommendations



RETENTION

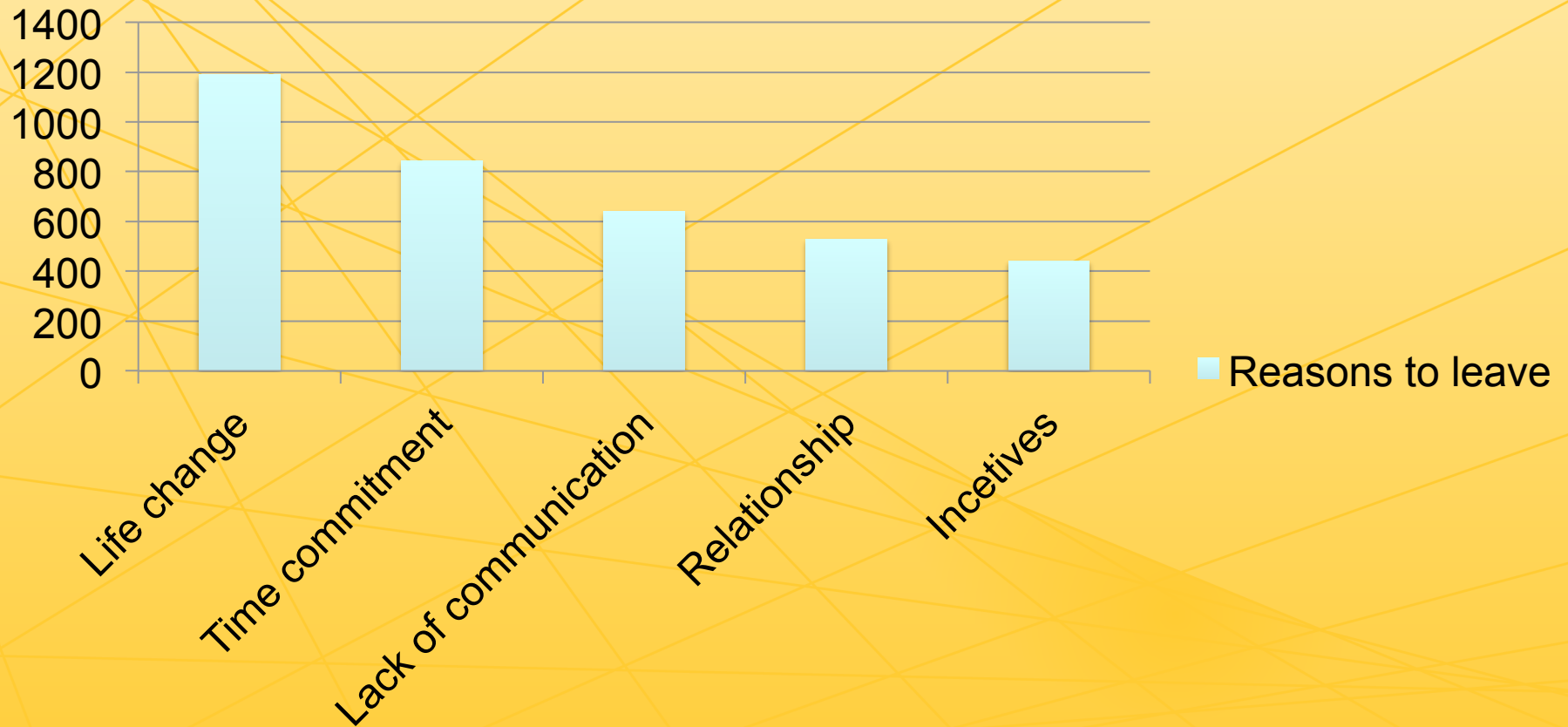
Retention Challenges

- Time commitment
- Lack of Motivation
- Burnout
- Lack of Communication



Reasons to leave the department¹

Reasons to leave

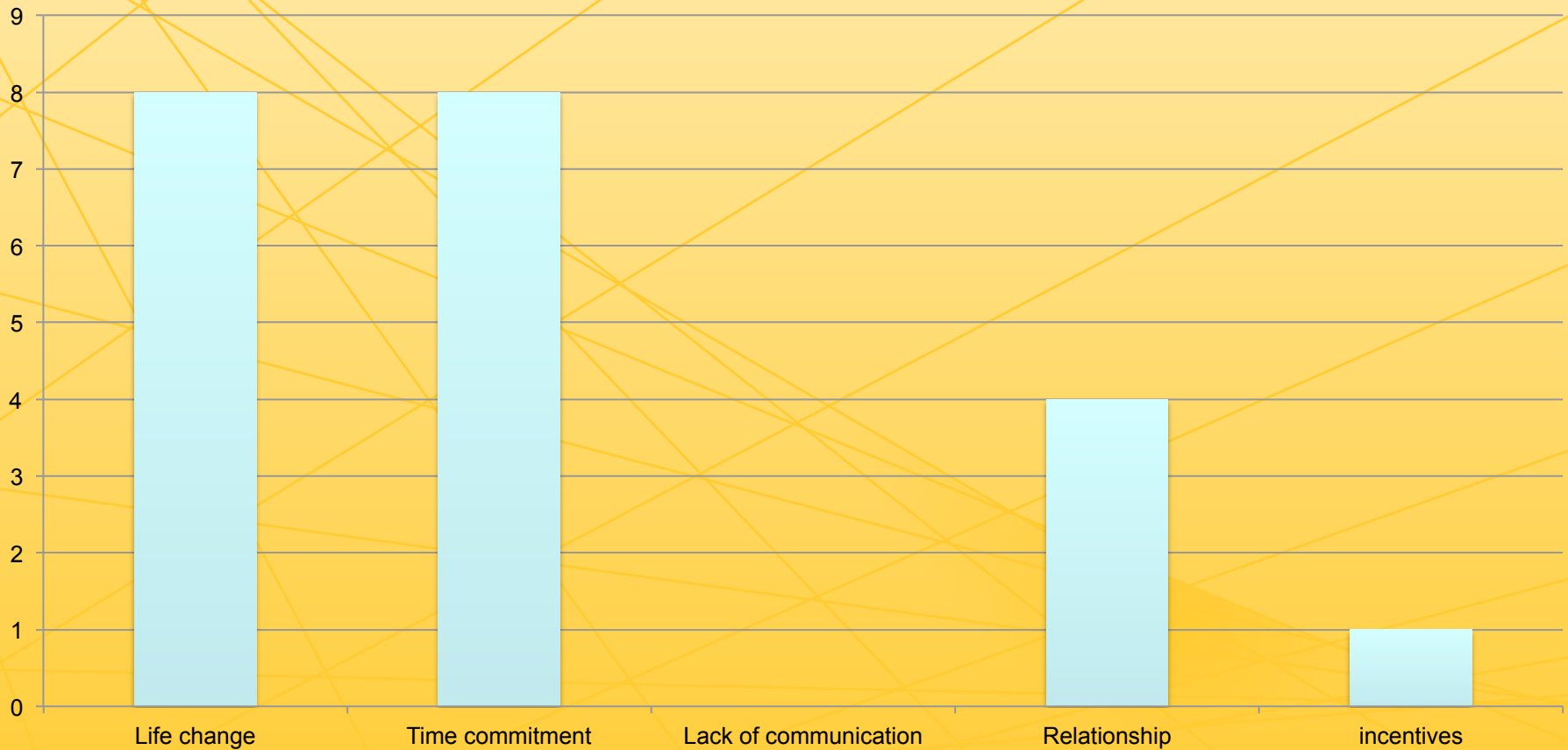


¹Virginia Fire Association, 2011



Victoria's reasons to leave

Reasons to leave



Time Commitment

- Communicate with employers¹
- Modify training delivery²
- Provide daycare service¹

¹Volunteer Alberta, 2010; ²Guide to Best practices in Volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention



Communicate with Employers

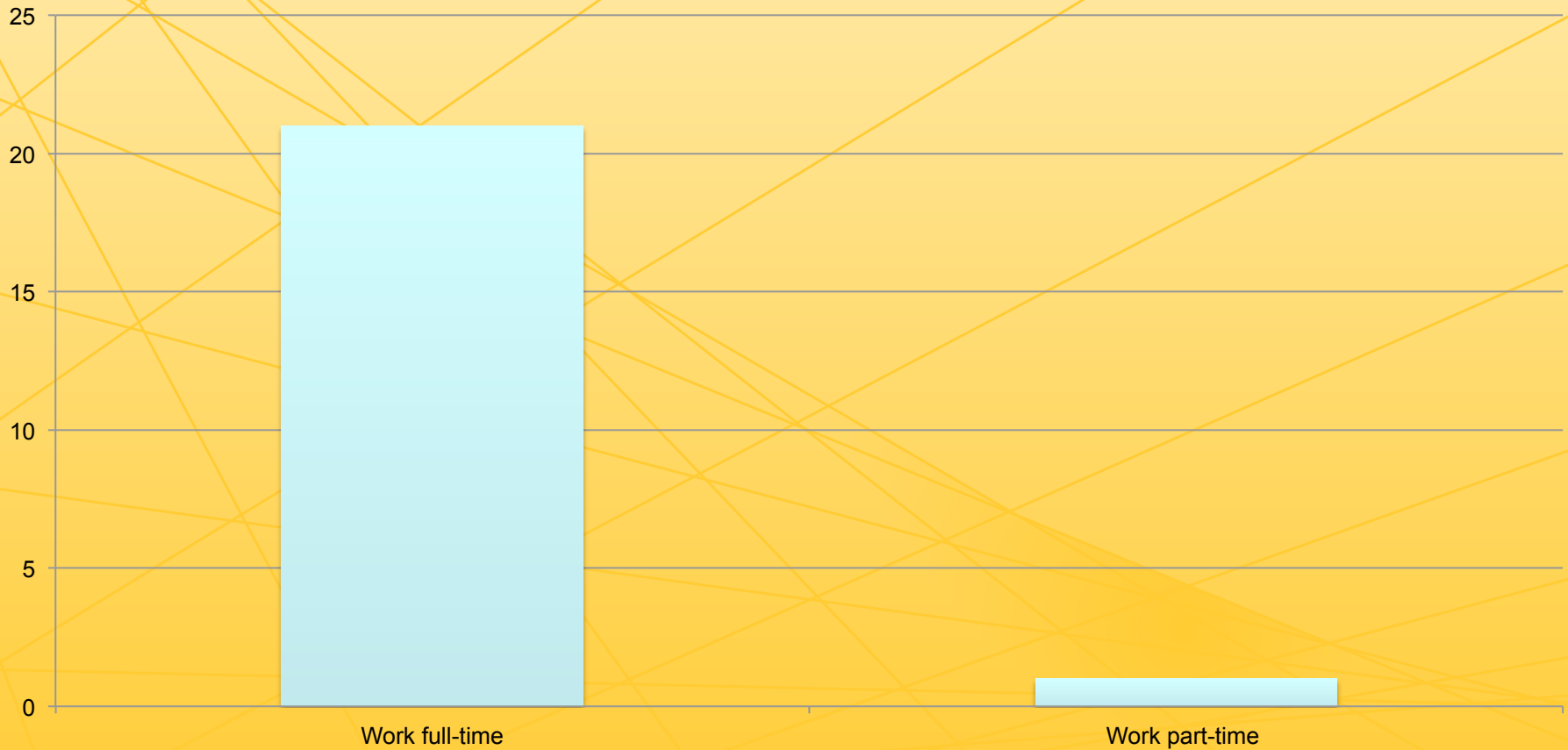
- Convey the importance of the fire departments to the community¹
- Articulate the direct and indirect benefits¹
- Recognize employers' support¹
- Reduce the burden of leaving the workplace for calls

¹Volunteer Alberta, 2010



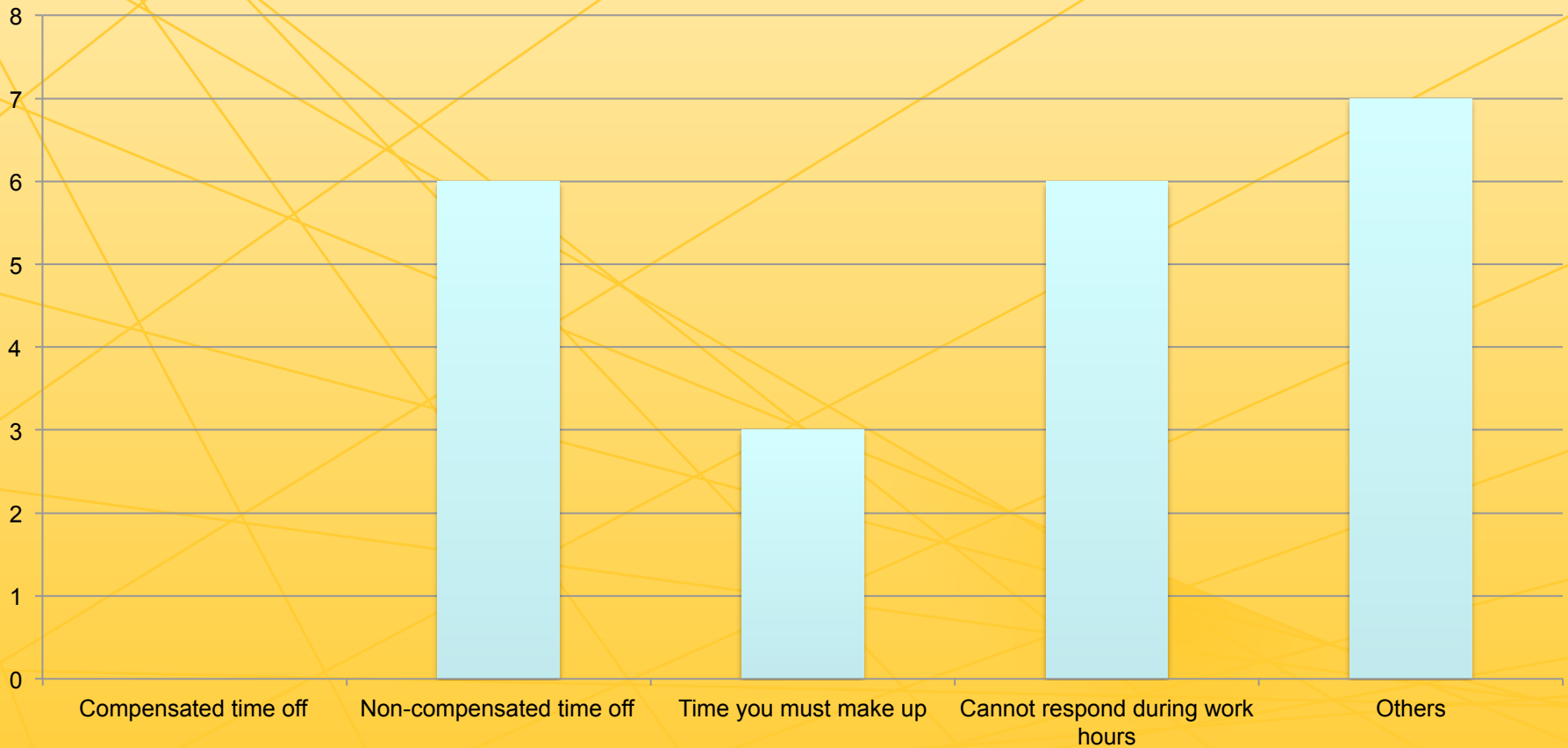
Employment status

Employment status



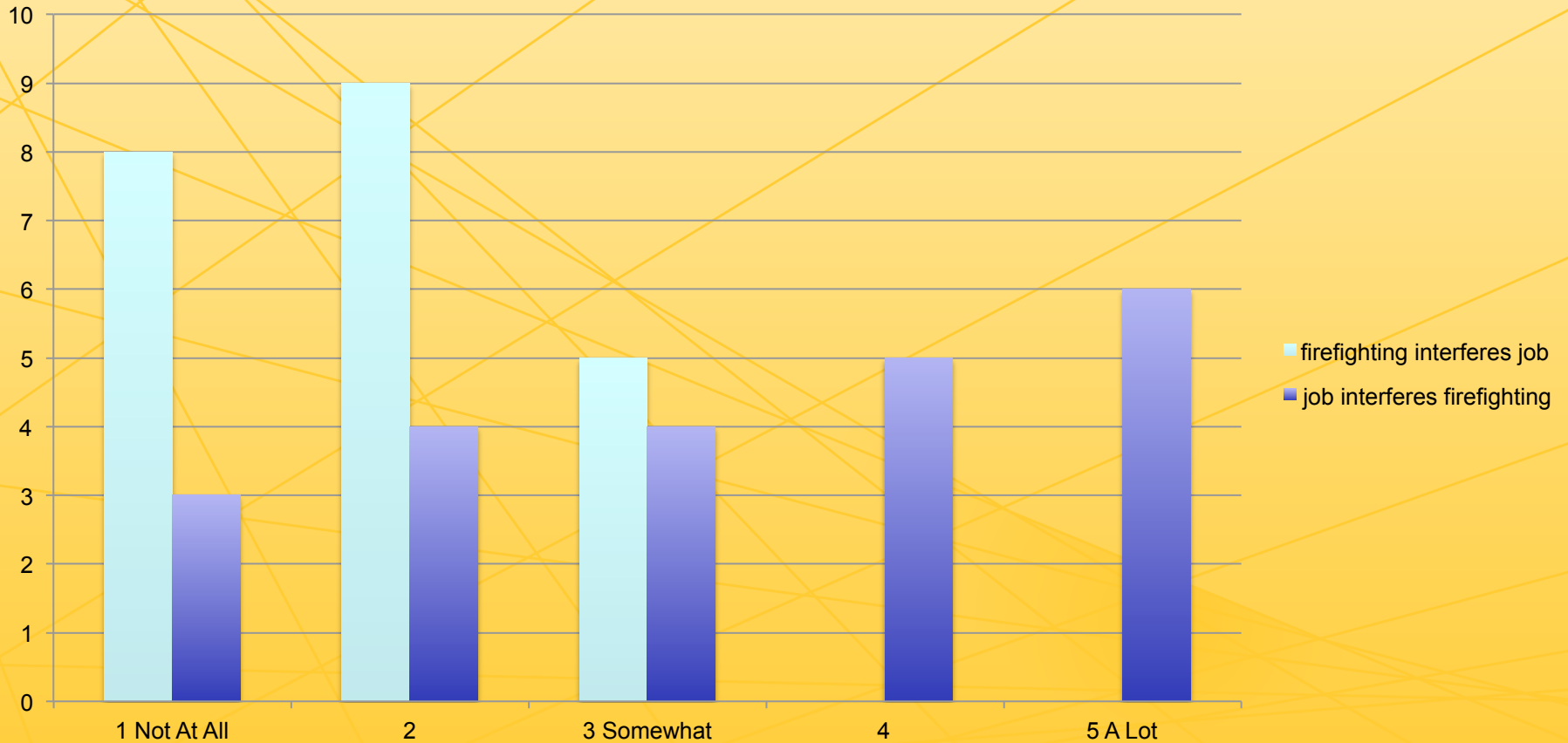
Reaction of Employers

Reaction of Employers



Influence of job in firefighting

Firefighting and Job



Recommendation for Victoria

- Recognition for company having most volunteer firefighters
- Maintain a list of accolades(e.g., the employer of the firefighters who have outstanding performance)
- Through monthly newsletter or social media



Recommendation for Victoria

- Persuasion message to companies
 - Write on a regular basis
 - Persuade the company to pay for volunteer firefighters when they have to leave
 - Tell them why you chose them¹
 - Make it specific and short
 - Express gratitude

¹Karau et al, 1993



Modification of training delivery

- Offer partial online training¹
- Tier training for specialization (a local department)

¹U.S. Fire administration



Recommendation for Victoria

- Option 1: Use online training programs to replace non-physical trainings
- Option 2: Contact neighboring departments to accommodate alternative sessions
- Give quizzes to make sure the learning process



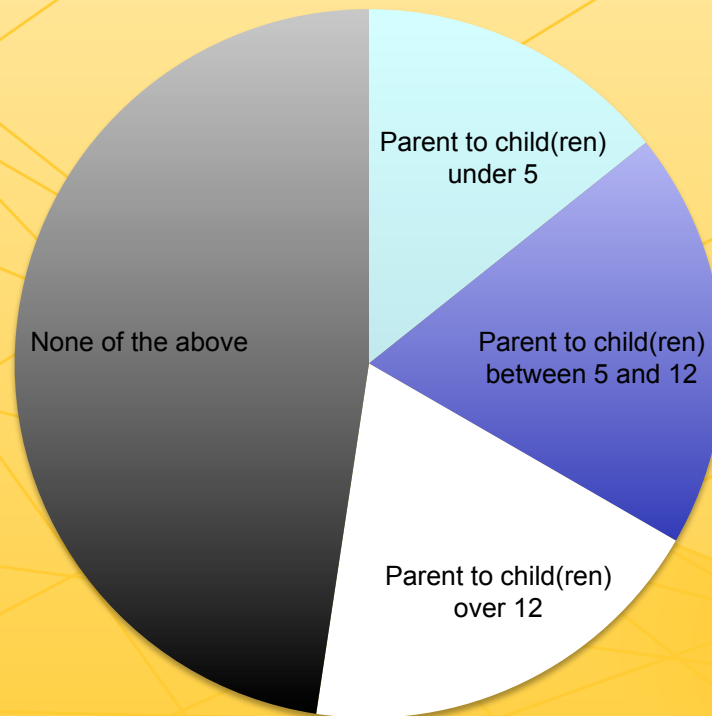
Daycare Service

- Lessens pressures for a single parent, a stay-at-home parent, or a dual-working household¹
- Partner with community groups or nearby daycare center¹
- Integrate as an ongoing activity of auxiliary group¹



Role as caregiver

Caregiver roles



Recommendation for Victoria

- Daytime weekday: Alphabet Junction Childcare Centers(7:30am to 5:30pm)
- Daytime weekend: Alphabet Junction Childcare Centers(7:30am to 5:30pm)
- Drop off children upon a call
- Recognize their support



Motivations

- Incentives
- Recognition
- Social gathering



Incentives as Motivator

- Tuition/ scholarships¹
- Gym memberships^{1,2}
- Local discounts¹
- Health benefits/ insurance¹
- Recognition

¹ Aldridge, 2003; ² Chapman, 2011



Tuition/scholarships

- Fire Chiefs Dan & Jim O'Connell Memorial scholarship¹
 - Named after the memorial of fire chief
- Recommendation for Victoria
 - Holy family Catholic high school
 - Yearly recognition to the children of firefighters
 - High GPA/ high retention, etc.

¹Brewster city, 1984

Gym memberships/Local discount

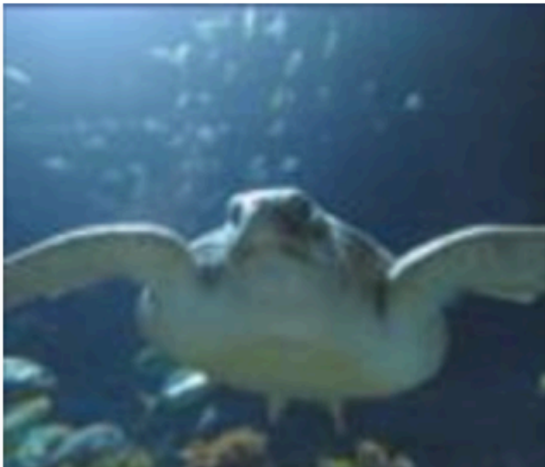
- Free wireless internet¹
- Contact and motivate local stores
 - Recognition for the stores supporting volunteer firefighters
 - Recreation center discounts
 - Deer Run Golf Club
- Search promotions outside Victoria



Example

Sea Life Aquarium offering “Free Admission for our Heroes”

This holiday season SEA LIFE Minnesota would like to show appreciation for men and women in uniform by offering free admission to the Aquarium at the Mall of America! This special offer is open to all first responders, including Military Veterans. Also, admission is 50% off for friends and family! To learn more, visit www.visitsealife.com/Minnesota/explore-our-creatures/heroes/



Heroes

Free Admission, Military Discount, EMT, Fire Fighter, Discounts, Police, Medical, EMS, EMT

VISITSEALIFE.COM | BY JAYWING

Recognition

- Can be used to retain current volunteers
- Recognize internally and externally
 - Within-department newsletters
 - Family support recognition
 - Exposure in media
 - Service award



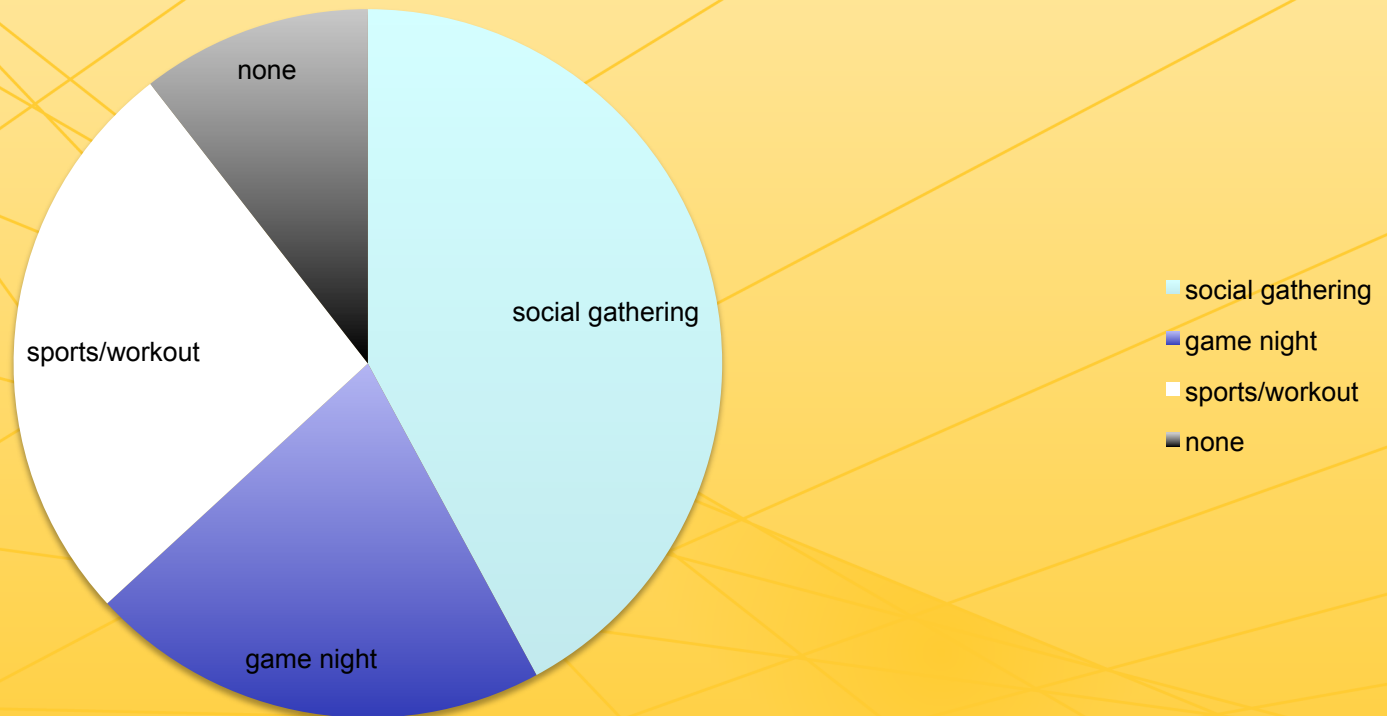
Social gatherings

- Decrease the amount of emotional exhaustion and burnout¹
- Increases sense of belonging from family members¹
- Social gathering can enhance both job performance and cooperative behavior²



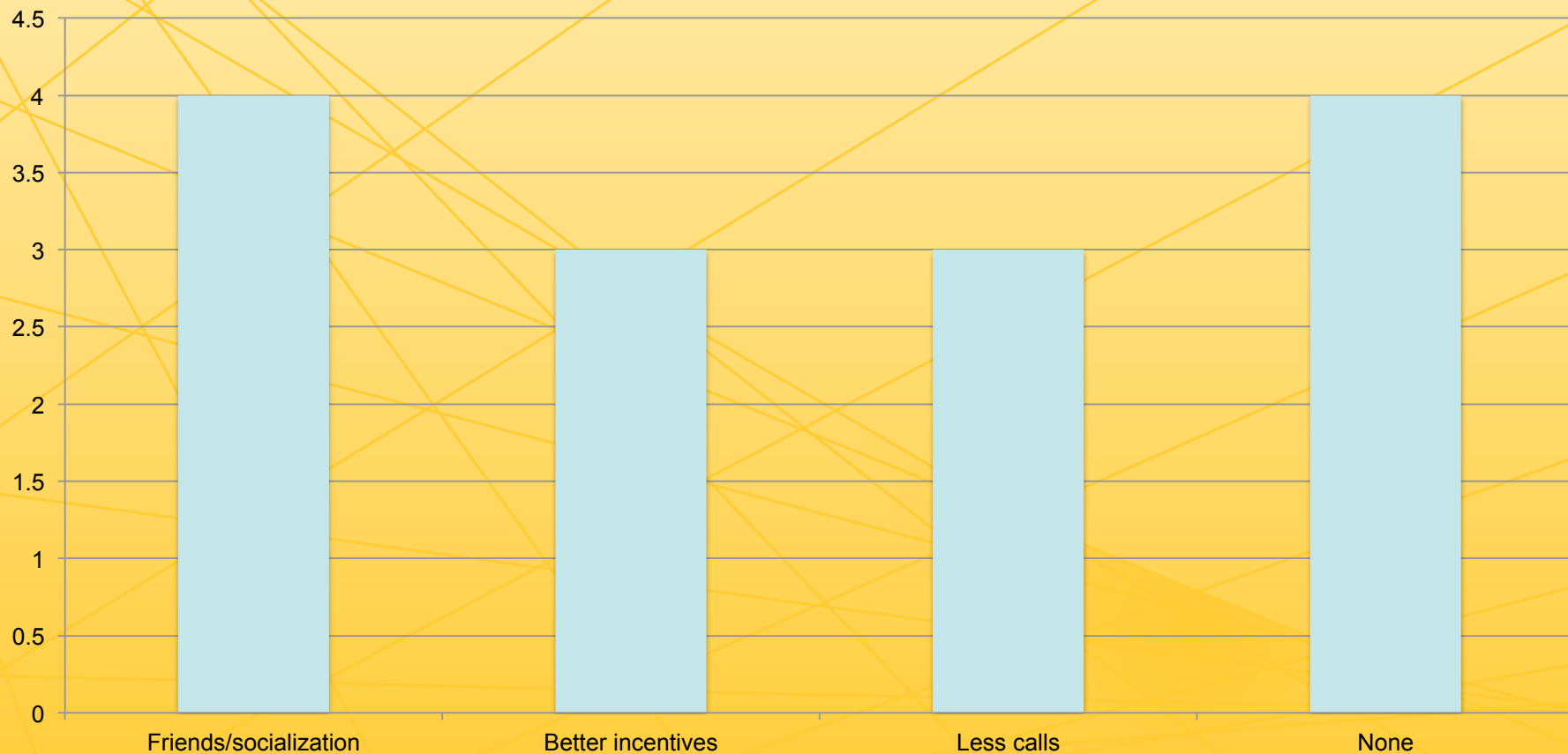
How they spend time together

How firefighters spend time together



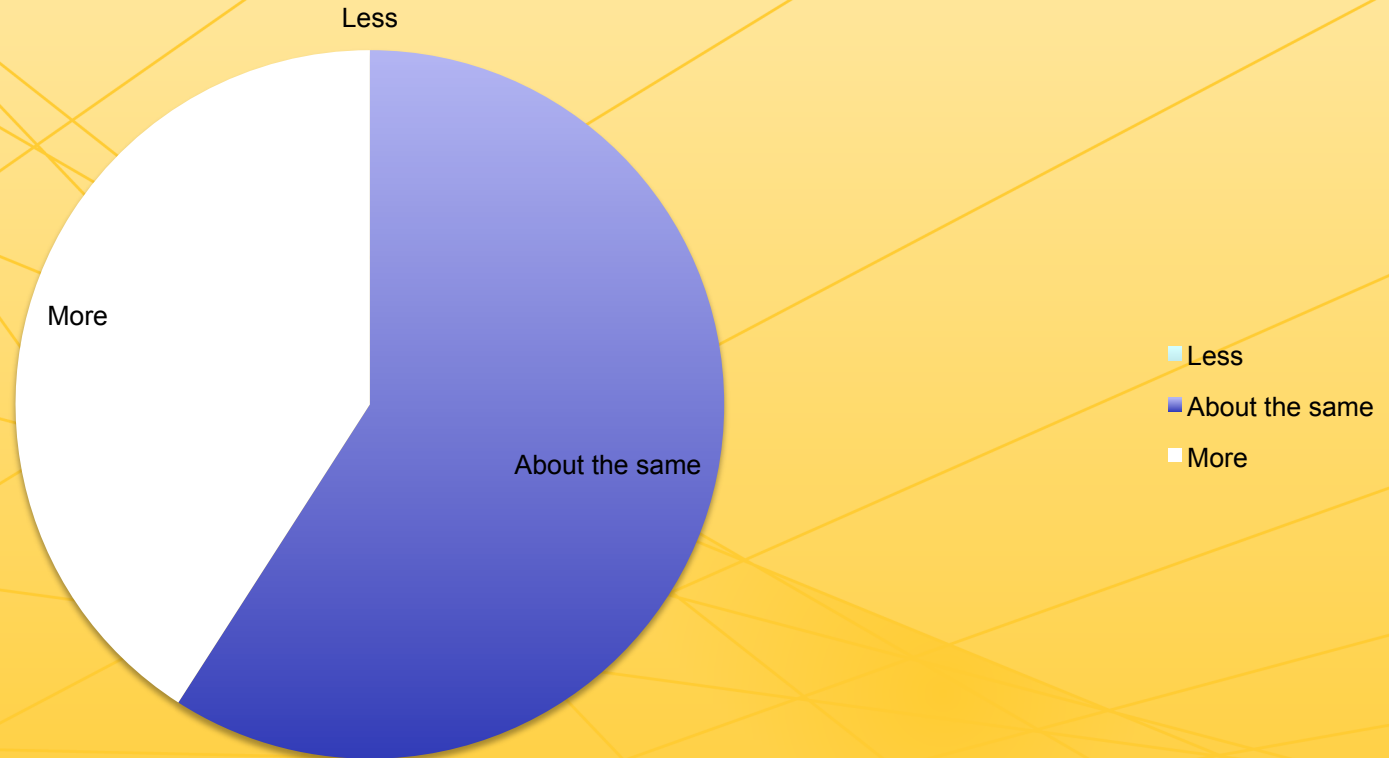
How to convince staying if considering to leave

Convincing to stay



Do you want more socialization?

More or less socialization



Recommendation for Victoria

- Hold regular social gathering events
- Recognize firefighters and their family members for being supportive to department



Burnout

- Realistic job previews
- Psychological support service



Realistic Job Preview

- Give realistic preview and lower expectation^{1,2}
- Give firefighters to make more informed decision
- Increase retention

¹Local FD; ²Jex&Britt, 2008



Psychological Support Service

- Open to both firefighters and spouses to prepare for traumatic calls
- Engage local professional psychological counselors as skilled volunteers(e.g., EAP)
- provide social support network inside firefighters¹



Peer support team¹

- Confidentiality is important¹
- Train them empathetic, non-judgmental listening skills using online resource¹

- ❖ If firefighters need mental treatment, should refer to appropriate experts¹

¹Billings, unknown;



Communication

- Entrance interviews
- Regular feedback
- Exit interviews



Entrance interviews

- Help volunteers to fulfill their reasons for joining is an on-going process
- Discover motivations for joining at the very beginning of a volunteer's tenure
 - Keep their goals and reasons for joining in mind
 - When possible, tailor opportunities to those goals
 - Work to make service individually fulfilling



Feedback and Communication

- Provide an outlet for anonymous feedback to the chief¹
- Provide regular feedback on performance¹

¹Volunteer Alberta, 2010

Exit Interview

- Increase retention
- Uncover real work environment¹
- Gain accurate point of views¹
- Main reasons for volunteer firefighters to quit¹
 - work/family needs, 51%
 - Dissatisfaction with the volunteer role, 25%
 - Conflict with current jobs, 15%

¹McLennan et al., 2008



Maintain Exit Interview Records

- Conduct exit interviews with everyone who leaves
 - Keep written records of the interviews to inform future practices
 - Exit interviews are a way to gauge the satisfaction of internal customers



Timing of Implementation

Ready for Use

- Communication with employers
- Entrance interview
- Exit interview

Near Future

- Peer support team
- Local discounts
- Recognition through newsletter

Down the Road

- Online training
 - Accommodate training with nearby cities
 - Daycare service
 - Scholarship
-



CONCLUSION

Ready to Implement

- Personal selling
- Social media
- NVFC website
- Shadowing
- Communication with employees
- Enter/exit interviews
- Volunteer support staff



Near Future

- Municipal recruits
- Recruitment training
- Branded ads
- Pilot testing materials
- Sampling
- Social media manager tools



Near Future cont.

- Peer support groups
- Local scholarships
- Local discounts
- Turnout gear



Down the road

- Referral program
- Mentoring
- SAFER grant
- Online training
- County-wide training accommodations
- Childcare services
- Duty crews
- Specialization

