

Firefighter's ABCs Diversity Approach and Philosophy

Overview

The under representation of women and minority groups within corporate America is mirrored within the fire service. While great strides are being made, a continued and focused effort must continue.

Against this backdrop, Firefighter's ABCs formed the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council. We firmly believe that full representation of all societal segments, within the fire service, can and will be achieved.

However, solutions will require heavy doses of creativity, ingenuity, new strategic initiatives and, broad alliances to offset the many challenges that abound.

We all recognize that the desire to become a firefighter is typically incubated at a relatively early age, especially when a young person relates to the uniformed person as a role model. However, this is less prevalent among minorities and women who might harbor the attitude of **"If I don't see any that look like me, then it's probably not meant to be."**

Added to this dilemma is the cost of Emergency Medical and other training requirements for prospects that typically come from lower income households.

There is also the need to earn an income throughout the lengthy process of getting hired for one of the few available positions. Lastly, the education disparity is reflected in lower high school test scores.

These issues, among others, represent significant impediments among fire departments seeking ample numbers of diverse recruits for current openings.

The situation can literally seem like finding "the needle in a haystack". Added to this is the need to build a viable pipeline of qualified and motivated candidates for recruitment in future years.

We believe that by coupling the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council with the National Recruit Database along and our [100% Free Firefighter's ABCs Online Internship Program](#) provides a strong foundation to successfully address the pressing requirement for fuller diversity within the fire service.

This will be accomplished through the Council's combination of "Best Practices", collaboration and cooperative efforts among fire departments nation-wide.

Fire Service Observations

Through hundreds of conversations with fire departments nation-wide, Firefighter's ABCs has observed a host of non-optimal efforts that hinder the fulfillment of diversity recruitment goals.

While some departments do a better job than others, our anecdotal evidence clearly indicates that most programs are not sustained over time and are not comprehensive or broad enough in scope. Provided below are a few of the "Areas for Improvement" that we see repeatedly:

- *Informal diversity initiatives versus written declarations with quantifiable recruitment goals.*
- *The absence of diversity within a department's long-term operational plan.*
- *Diversity mandates not permeating every level of the organization via periodic communications.*
- *Failure to establish a "Diversity Czar" with accountability for coordinating efforts and realizing quantifiable goals.*
- *No working relationships with diversity-based organizations.*
- *Lack of community outreach, entry-level workshops, internships and other programs designed to fill the pipeline with future candidates.*
- *A singular focus upon the 'next' recruitment event versus longer-term activities to sustain the pipeline.*
- *Fishing only in the local pond versus expanding the traditional geographic area of recruitment.*

If your department can relate to any of the above, membership in the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council will serve you well. Through vigorous collaboration with other departments, and greatly aided by the National Recruit Database of candidates, you will find solutions readily available.

Our Approach

A belief in the 'Power of Numbers' is why the Firefighter Diversity Recruitment Council was formed and was subsequently coupled with the Firefighter's ABCs National Recruit Database. We also view collaboration among a nation-wide network of Council member fire

departments as pivotal to optimizing and sharing best practices in the area of diversity recruitment. Key elements of our approach, and why they work, include:

- **Collaboration through the Council to exchange ideas and experiences. Find out what works and what doesn't. Don't reinvent the wheel and minimize duplicating errors already made by others.**
- **Benefit from the collective experiences of fellow Council members and experts in the field of diversity recruitment through "How To" tips and articles on our web site.**
 - **Collaboration through the Council to exchange ideas and experiences. Find out what works and what doesn't. Don't reinvent the wheel and minimize duplicating errors already made by others.**
 - **Significantly broaden the awareness of promotional job openings, by posting opportunities directly to fellow Council members.**
 - **Entry-Level recruitment postings to reach the nation-wide subscriber audience of the National Recruit Database, thereby expanding the available pool of candidates for all Council members. This is of particular importance for fire departments for which a diversity of candidates is not clustered within their served community.**
 - **Fostering an "Across-the-Board" embrace of diversity initiatives through collaboration with local, regional, state and national entities, e.g., Chiefs Associations as well as ethnic and gender-based organizations.**
 - **Fostering joint recruitment efforts among Council member departments to generate more effective and cost-efficient outcomes while spreading the manpower load.**
- **Fostering an "Across-the-Board" embrace of diversity initiatives through collaboration with local, regional, state and national entities, e.g., Chiefs Associations as well as ethnic and gender-based organizations.**

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I thank you in advance for sharing our site in your city, state, nationwide and in Canada.

Please ask others in your network to do the same.

I hope our many **100% Free** support tools on our site will be shared by you with anyone seeking a career in the fire service which has many fields other than fighting fires.

Most of us dream of a career but seldom do we know how to make our dreams become a reality.

Similar is the process for aspiring Firefighters and Emergency Medical Service candidates.

Many wish to be part an honored profession with great retirement and benefits such as the Fire Service or EMS field but don't know where or how to start.

Thus, FFABC's was founded in 1999 to offer diverse and otherwise untapped job seekers resources and tools to streamline these efforts to enter this desired career field.

During these times of social change as it relates to diversity in the fire service, I am asking a small favor.

Please mentor diverse youth both females and males to join our **100% Free** Firefighter's ABCs Online Internship program at www.FirefightersABCs.com

Most important please share this with other people nationwide that will also join our effort and will also share within their network.

By mentoring a youth to join you can make a difference in someone's life with a focus on our 9th grade girls and boys through post college.

<https://firefightersabcs.com/diversity-honor-roll/>

If you would like to take a tour of our site, please send the following to russellhayden@firefightersabcs.com

- First and last name
- Company name if it applies
- Phone number for me to call
- Email address for me to respond
- Three dates and times (please use PST) which will work for you and I will select one
- Do not worry about EST vs PST as I often work on EST

Regards, Russell G. Hayden – Founder

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www.firefightersabcs.com site

