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photo courtesy of Kris Nesbitt



1st Qtr.
2024

A Quarterly Insight Into New Hampshire's Fire & EMS Workforce

Recruitment & Retention News



story update >>>

“On My Time” Firefighter I and II Training Program

To date, 1,265 online modules and 30 skills modules have been completed. For information on this program visit [On My Time Firefighter I&II Training program – New Hampshire Fire Academy & EMS \(nhfa-ems.com\)](https://www.nhfa-ems.com).



Latest News

A Quick Rundown

This newsletter describes the events, trainings, updates, and tips relating to recruitment and retention coordinated by New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training & Emergency Medical Services during the first quarter of 2024.

Seven classes have been facilitated since the beginning of the year to help assist New Hampshire's Fire and EMS leadership in their recruitment and retention efforts. The presenters shared their knowledge and experience with everything from grant writing, how to implement a firefighter live-in program, funding sources available for paid fire and EMS training, to how to properly pay emergency

responders in accordance with federal laws. While attending high school career fairs recently, it has become apparent that more female students are interested in becoming first responders compared to male students. Furthermore, a high school student services coordinator was happy to report that due to an increase in student interest in emergency medical services, they are likely to begin an

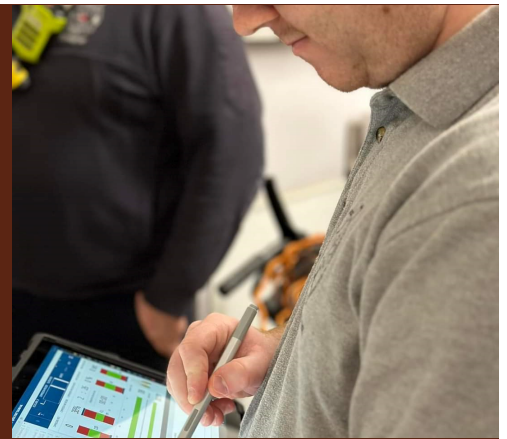
EMS program next school year. We will follow up with the high school next year for an update on the program's success.

In case you missed it, new funding allows current first responders to take a course at any of New Hampshire's community colleges, including online courses offered by the Community College System of New Hampshire. The program covers tuition and fees for one

course per semester, subject to availability. Full-time, part-time, on-call and volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians are eligible under this program. In addition, New Hampshire firefighters can be reimbursed for certain approved classes taken at NH Fire Academy that are not covered by other funding sources. For details visit [Recruitment and Retention \(nh.gov\)](https://www.nh.gov).

To increase your talent pool, consider holding a virtual recruitment event, if possible during evening hours, to educate interested candidates on your hiring requirements including testing and certifications, the hiring process, and how to apply with your organization.

Semi-annual Staffing Questionnaire Results



In January a recruitment & retention semi-annual staffing questionnaire was sent to all NH fire departments and EMS units to gauge the previous six months.



Recruitment

According to answers received, at least 260 firefighters and at least 158 EMS providers were hired in the past 6 months. Note: This includes lateral transfers.

Vacancies

At least **343 firefighters** and at least **250 EMS providers** are still needed according to those departments that responded. That means there has been no change in the number of firefighter vacancies, and a 9.7% **decrease** of EMS providers vacancies from last July's numbers. This indicates progress is in sight!

Survey Takers

111 fire departments and 18 EMS units answered the questionnaire for a total of 129 organizations. The more answers received the better we can gauge progress and what areas remain troublesome.

Retention

According to answers received, at least 206 firefighters and at least 75 EMS providers left organizations in the past 6 months. There is no further information on successful retainment at this time.



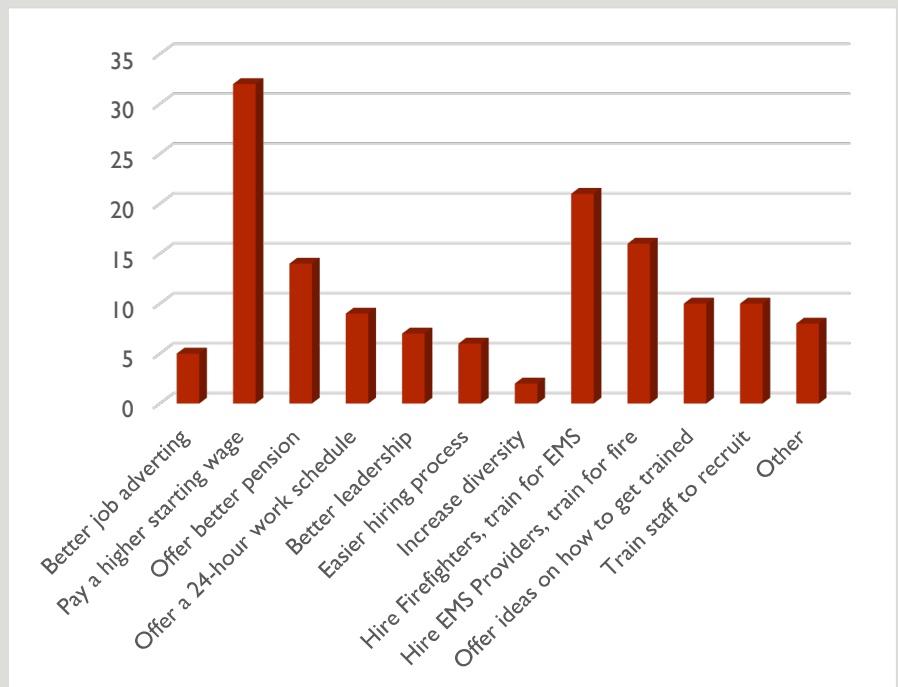
Jobs for America's Graduates - New Hampshire (JAG-NH) supports eligible 16-24 year olds facing barriers to employment, as they want to pursue a career in healthcare. **JAG-NH will pay for all training costs, uniforms, books, etc.** to be certified in the healthcare field. This includes, but is not limited to: LNA, **EMT**, Phlebotomy, Eye Tech, Vet Tech, Dental Tech & more! Alongside funding, JAG-NH provides career navigation support and leadership opportunities. JAG-NH wants to support young people to grow into good employees and good citizens. Current locations include:

- North Country
- Concord/Manchester
- Lakes Region
- Keene/Monadnock Region

For more information email info@jagnh.org or visit [Home\(jagnh.org\)](http://Home(jagnh.org)).

Candidates Weigh In

One hundred and ninety-one (191) New Hampshire Firefighter candidates who passed CPAT in 2023 were asked to give their insight on recruitment and retention. Forty-two (42) recruits responded. **The question asked them what they believe fire departments should do in order to recruit more firefighters.** Their answers are reflected in the graph below:



With an increase of females showing interest in the fire service, it is important to keep the empowerment momentum going. One way of doing that is by showcasing New Hampshire's strong female firefighter force. Women are more likely to pursue positions as firefighters when they see more representation of women in the fire service. It will be easier to recruit women if there is a welcoming atmosphere where they feel supported, appreciated, and at ease. That is what the group of women (photo to the right) did in February at the third CPAT Prep for Women class. The class provided female prospects with coaching, mentorship, and encouragement. It also gave the mentors a chance to demonstrate their leadership skills. These classes would not be possible without the support of New Hampshire's fire departments or without the help of their female firefighters. We hope to offer another class this summer.

CPAT PREP FOR WOMEN

Feb. 4, 2024

MEET YOUR MENTORS



Jennifer Sole
Bow Fire Department



Louise Bishop
Derry Fire Department



Kerri Kenneson
Hooksett Fire Department



Timary Malley
Derry Fire Department



Tenley Gillett
Manchester Fire Department



Valentina Shubina
Londonderry Fire Department



Chief Pendergast
Alton Fire Department



Amelia Aznive
Merrimack Fire Department



Kaycee Reagan
Portsmouth Fire Department



Goffstown Fire Department

The First SkillBridge Industry Partner in the New England



resource

**'anything would be an improvement':
how FDs can move the needle on
staffing challenges**



[‘Anything would be an improvement’: How FDs can move the needle on staffing challenges \(firerescue1.com\)](https://firerescue1.com)

Tired of struggling to recruit new firefighters, Goffstown Fire Department took matters into their own hands and managed to do

something that no other organization in all of New England has done before: They applied for and was approved to have the Goffstown Fire Department become a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) SkillBridge Industry Partner. SkillBridge links transitioning

military service members with industry partners so that they can gain training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180 days of separating from service. The program bridges the gap between the end of service and the start of civilian work. **The DOD pays the service member's salary and benefits while they participate in SkillBridge.** That means there will be no

cost to Goffstown. Goffstown Fire Department designed the internship to meet the department's specific workforce needs –

to gain full-time professional Firefighter/AEMTs. The Interns will take the Candidate Physical Ability Test (“CPAT”) and any other classes they don't have such as Firefighter I & II, EMT, or AEMT, and Driver Operator All Vehicle, leading him/her to full-time employment. From the

time Goffstown submitted their initial request for an application, it took approximately nine weeks for the DOD to send them a program approval notice. Any questions relating to Goffstown's experience can be directed to Deputy Chief Ben Selleck. For more information on this recruitment program visit [DOD SkillBridge Program - Industry Partner Page \(osd.mil\)](https://osd.mil).

State First In Nation To Train 'Emergency Medical Technicians'

Persons who have never been involved in highway accidents often assume that the ambulance summoned to pick up victims is always manned by fully trained personnel. But —

"This is not always true," officials of the N.H. Highway Safety Agency said today. The National Highway Safety Bureau, as a result of a recent nationwide survey, states that more than half of the estimated 160,000 ambulance personnel in the nation have had less training than advanced Red Cross first aid.

New Hampshire is currently first in the nation to alter this state of affairs by providing a basic training course to increase the competency of all ambulance personnel. A pilot program of a 71-hour course for 22 persons, drawn from all parts of the state, is currently being held at the Laconia Vocational-Technical College Mondays and Thursdays from 7 to 10 p.m.

The course, which began on April 30, is based on guidelines developed by the Federal Agency and is presented by the N.H. Department of Education, Division of Vocational Adult Education, assisted by the N.H. Highway Safety Agency and the State Division of Public Health.

This first program including

textbooks and supplies, has been offered at no cost to the student. It is scheduled to end July 20.

Cressy Goodwin, coordinator of emergency medical services for the State Health Department, warned, however, that future courses planned for this fall throughout the state may require some registration fee to help defray expenses.

EMT Rating

As part of the plan to upgrade the professional status of ambulance personnel, the U.S. Department of Transportation has recommended that those personnel who have successfully completed this new training should be graded as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

The federal department has set up guidelines for persons to be eligible to take a course for qualification as an EMT. They are: A high school diploma or equivalent; proficiency in reading, writing and speaking English; the holding of a current driver's or chauffeur's license; to be at least 18 years old, physically fit and able to meet any additional requirements of the state in which the course is given.

Hospital Training

The training course of 71 hours, covering 25 lessons, is be-

ing augmented at Laconia by a recommended 10 hours of in-hospital observation and training.

Subjects being taught during this New Hampshire pilot course include; life threatening emergencies, injuries, common medical emergencies, emergency childbirth and problems of child patients, lifting and moving patients, environmental emergencies, extrication of persons from motor vehicles and operational aspects and responsibilities of the EMT's job.

A further breakdown of the subjects shows the teaching in depth of methods necessary to assist victims suffering from pulmonary and cardiac arrest, bleeding and shock, wounds and fractures as well as body injuries. The Federal Department of Transportation has also recommended that those who pass this pilot course be licensed by the state and that such licenses be renewed periodically as a means of ensuring maintenance of efficiency.

The agency also has recommended that further training courses be instituted so that qualified Emergency Medical Technicians can acquire the further knowledge necessary to perform more advanced procedures.

helpful tip >>>

3 Most Commonly Asked Questions You Will Be Asked

While participating in multiple high school career fairs and job fairs throughout the State, I discovered a trend in questions being asked by interested people in all age groups. Below are the most commonly asked questions.

- 1. HOW MUCH DO YOU PAY PER HOUR?**
The hourly rate, not annual salary, matters more to Gen Z's so have this number and any step increase info handy.
- 2. HOW MANY CALLS DO YOU GO ON PER DAY?**
Be honest about how busy or slow your department is. People want transparency. If you are slow, tell them about trainings and other ways you stay busy including mutual aid calls and community outreach events.
- 3. AM I TOO OLD TO BE A FIRST RESPONDER?**
Many people assume that if they are not in their early 20's that it's too late for them to volunteer or start a career as a Firefighter or EMS Provider. Reassure them they are not.

2024 social media trends to get your organization noticed

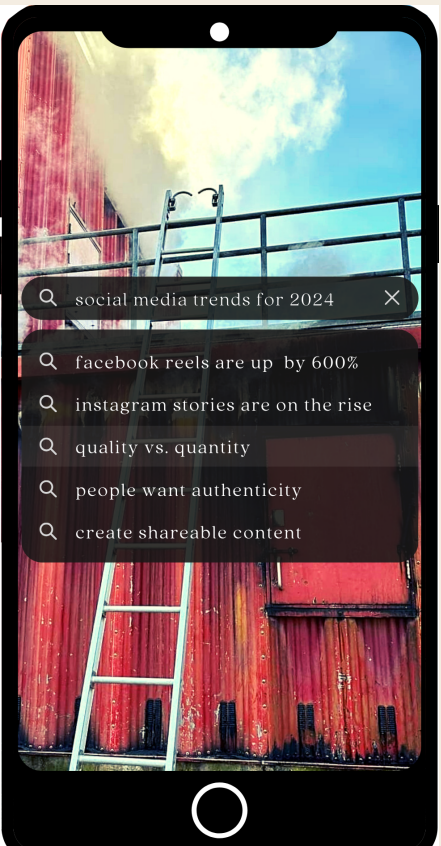


Image clipped from Newspapers.com from The Concord Monitor, Concord, NH July 10, 1970, Page 6.



Belmont's Fire Chief

Chief Deborah Black was headed down the law enforcement road when she decided to get her EMT license while waiting to apply to become a police officer. Little did she know that becoming an EMT would change her entire career trajectory. Chief Black fell in love with the fire service and enrolled at the NH Fire Academy in the mid-1990s. From there she began a long and successful journey as a firefighter at different fire departments and eventually settled at Belmont where recently she became Chief of Belmont Fire Department. When asked what advice she would give her 25-year-old self, she quickly answered, "I would tell myself to join the fire service sooner."

rookie days





final thoughts...

I am humbled and excited to have been asked to be a part of the U.S. Fire Administration's Recruitment and Retention Work Group. This opportunity will allow me to share ideas and successes in New Hampshire's recruitment and retention efforts and to learn of others that are happening across the country. I am happy to be on a team with members of the National Fire Academy, National Volunteer Fire Council, International Association of Fire Fighters, and others who are dedicated to tackling recruitment and retention issues of first responders head-on.

Kimberly McCulloch, Recruitment & Retention Coordinator at New Hampshire Fire Standards and Training & EMS

UPCOMING CPAT TESTS 2024



**APR
22**

MERRILL FAY ARENA

LACONIA

MERRILL FAY ARENA

LACONIA

**JUN
10**



**AUG
12**

NH FIRE ACADEMY

CONCORD

NH FIRE ACADEMY

CONCORD

**OCT
21**



**NOV
18**

NH FIRE ACADEMY

CONCORD

nhfa-ems.com/course/candidate-physical-ability-test/



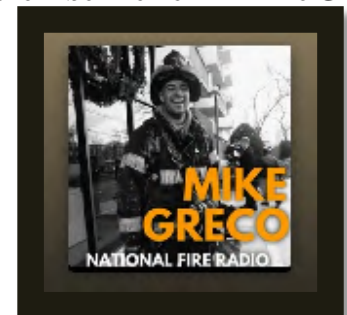
coming soon >>>

Don't miss out!

- April 10 – WorkInvest EMT Training Program VIRTUAL
- April 21 – CPAT Intro for all genders at Merrill Fay Arena in Laconia
- May 1 – Building Talent Through Apprenticeships at New Hampton
- May 14 – Extended Learning Opportunities Network at FSTEMS
- May 23 – How to Stand Out in an Oral Board at FSTEMS

resource

“let them be firemen” – Mike Greco



[312. "Let Them be Firemen" - Mike Greco - National Fire Radio | Podcast on Spotify](#)

Have any great ideas or news to share?

If you have a recent recruitment or retention success story and would like to have it shared in a future newsletter please email Kimberly.M.McCulloch@dos.nh.gov.