CHATHAM COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

CCFD STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2028

MARCH 13, 2025

BUILDING A SAFER COMMUNITY THROUGH SERVICE EXCELLENCE

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OVERVIEW

The CCFD Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 outlines a comprehensive, forward-thinking framework to enhance public safety and deliver high-quality fire services across Chatham County. Aligned with the Chatham County Government's mission to improve the quality of life of all residents, this plan serves as a roadmap for meeting the community's evolving needs, maximizing operational efficiency, and fostering a collaborative approach to risk reduction and emergency preparedness.

The plan is built around ten strategic priority goals, each focused on key areas such as workforce development, data-driven decision-making, resource deployment, and community engagement. Committed to continuous improvement, professional development, and proactive public outreach, this strategy will follow the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) model and other national benchmarks. By adhering to these established standards, CCFD will ensure a more adaptable, resilient, and forward-thinking fire service, fully prepared to meet current and emerging challenges while ensuring responsible financial stewardship.

This document serves as a foundation to guide department efforts in establishing a safer, more resilient community over the next four years. It highlights our commitment to innovation, inclusiveness, and service excellence, which are central to our mission and values.

MISSION AND VISION

In alignment with the Chatham County Government's mission to protect and serve the public and provide essential services to improve the quality of life, and the vision to make Chatham County, Georgia, the best place to live, work, and play, we have developed a paired mission and vision for the Chatham County Fire Department (CCFD).

Our mission is to ensure community safety by reducing community risks through education and inspections, providing rapid and effective emergency response, and expanding behavioral healthcare services to meet growing demands.

Our vision is for CCFD to be a recognized leader in fire and emergency services, renowned for service excellence, innovation, and strong community partnerships. We strive to build a resilient and safe community by fostering collaboration, engaging with the public, and cultivating a highly skilled, diverse workforce.

This vision not only supports but also enhances the overall mission and vision of Chatham County Government, ensuring that our community remains a great place to live, work, and play.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

CCFD is driven by a set of organizational values that guide our service to the community:

1. **Dedication -** We are unwavering in our commitment to the safety and well-being of those we serve, always striving to protect lives and property with the highest level of professionalism.

2. **Sacrifice -** We recognize the inherent demands of our profession and are willing to put the needs of the community before our own, demonstrating courage and selflessness in every action.

3. **Commitment -** We are steadfast in our pursuit of service excellence, continuously improving our skills, services, and response to ensure the highest standard of fire and emergency services.

4. **Love for Community -** Our passion for serving Chatham County goes beyond duty; it is deep and genuine care for the people and neighborhoods we protect, fostering trust and partnership with those we serve.

ESSENTIAL INITIATIVES

Essential Initiatives are critical actions, programs, or projects that CCFD recognizes as essential for achieving its long-term goals, mission, and vision. These initiatives serve as the foundation for driving progress, tackling key challenges, and fulfilling strategic priorities. Designed to enhance performance, promote innovation, and ensure the organization effectively addresses the evolving needs of the community, they are pivotal to our continued success.

1. **Service Excellence:** We will be committed to delivering the highest level of service to our community. Our dedication to professionalism and continuous improvement ensures that we set the standard for fire service delivery. We strive for excellence in every action, operation, and interaction, embodying the principles of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) model.

2. **Advancement and Innovation:** We will embrace new technologies, methods, and ideas that are fundamental to our effectiveness in evolving to meet the needs of our community.

3. **Community Partnership:** We will build and nurture strong relationships with our community and partner organizations are essential to promoting safety, resilience, and mutual support. We engage actively with the public to collaborate on initiatives that enhance community well-being and foster a shared sense of responsibility.

4. **Proactive Risk Reduction:** We will be dedicated to identifying and mitigating risks through education, prevention programs, and strategic initiatives. Our proactive approach aims to reduce the impact of potential hazards and enhance community safety through informed and deliberate actions.

5. **State-of-the-Art Training:** We will invest in comprehensive and cutting-edge training programs is vital to maintaining a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce. We ensure that all personnel, from firefighters to chiefs, are prepared to excel in their roles and contribute effectively to our mission of fostering a resilient and safe community.

6. **Valuing Every Team Member:** We will uphold a culture that values and embraces the unique perspectives and backgrounds of our workforce, fostering an environment where every team member feels respected, valued, and empowered. Our dedication to equity and belonging enhances our department and mirrors the vibrant diversity of the community we serve.

7. **Collaboration:** We will promote a culture of teamwork and open communication both within the department and with external partners. Collaboration is key to achieving our shared goals and enhancing our collective impact on community safety and service excellence.

8. **Integrity:** We will uphold the highest ethical standards is a cornerstone of our operations. We demonstrate honesty, transparency, and accountability in all our actions, ensuring that we earn and maintain the trust and respect of our community.

9. **Compassion:** We will offer empathetic and respectful care to everyone we encounter, including patients, colleagues, and community members. Our interactions are guided by kindness and understanding, reflecting our commitment to honoring the human element in every situation.

10. **Resilience:** We will build resilience within our department and community. It is essential for adapting to and recovering from challenges and disasters. We are dedicated to fostering an environment of strength and adaptability, ensuring that we remain capable and prepared in the face of adversity.

These essential initiatives, serving as the foundation for our work, will guide our actions and decisions as we strive to fulfill our mission and vision. Through these initiatives, we aim to contribute to the overall well-being and quality of life in Chatham County.

CORE STRATEGIES

To achieve our mission and vision, the CCFD has identified a series of core strategies that guide our efforts to provide exemplary service to the community. These strategies are essential to advancing our goals, addressing current challenges, and positioning the department for long-term success.

Each strategy reflects a commitment to enhancing our operational effectiveness, strengthening community partnerships, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By focusing on these areas, we will ensure that CCFD remains a trusted and innovative leader in fire and emergency services. Our core strategies are designed to create a safer, more resilient community, build a highly skilled and diverse workforce, and drive excellence in all aspects of service delivery.

The following strategies outline the key areas where we will direct our efforts and resources in the coming years to fulfill our mission of protecting lives, property, and the environment.

1. **Building a Stronger Workforce** – Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention

2. **Enhancing Organizational Resilience** – Adaptability, Efficiency, and Growth

3. **Leveraging Data for Smarter Decisions** – Collection, Analysis, and Application

4. **Optimizing Resources for Maximum Impact** – Strategic Allocation and Deployment

5. **Strengthening Community Connections** – Engagement, Education, and Outreach

6. **Improving Internal Communications** – Transparency, Collaboration, and Efficiency

7. **Advancing Professional Growth** – Training, Development, and Leadership

8. **Prioritizing Health and Safety** – Total Wellness & Cancer Risk Reduction

9. **Investing in Infrastructure** – Facility Infrastructure Enhancement

10. **Enhancing Operational Readiness** – Equipment and Apparatus Improvement

PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Priorities, Goals, and Objectives form the foundation for achieving our mission and vision. **Priorities** define key focus areas, guiding decisions and resource allocation. **Goals** set measurable outcomes that drive progress, while **Objectives** outline actionable steps for implementation. In this plan, they provide a structured framework to direct efforts, measure impact, and ensure continuous improvement in service, operations, and community engagement.

Core Strategy: Building a Stronger Workforce

Priority 1 - Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention: Develop a comprehensive recruitment, hiring, and retention strategy that offers competitive pay to attract, support, and retain a diverse, highly skilled, and well-compensated response force. This initiative will ensure CCFD is fully prepared to meet the evolving emergency service needs of Chatham County.

Goals:

1. Strengthen Recruitment Initiatives

- Expand outreach efforts to address CCFD's staffing needs more effectively.

- Collaborate with educational institutions, community organizations, and professional networks to establish a steady pipeline of qualified candidates.

- Highlight competitive pay in recruitment campaigns to attract top talent and reinforce CCFD's commitment to valuing its workforce.

2. Optimize Hiring Processes

- Simplify and accelerate the application, testing, and interview procedures to minimize hiring delays.

- Utilize standardized assessment tools to ensure a fair, consistent, and objective evaluation of candidates.

- Regularly review and adjust pay rates to remain competitive with market standards and attract top talent.

- Actively promote compensation and benefits throughout the hiring process to engage and retain high-quality applicants.

3. Enhance Retention Programs

- Expand mentorship and career development initiatives to provide clear pathways for professional growth.

- Strengthen the employee recognition program with well-defined criteria and regular awards, including monthly recognitions.

- Conduct routine salary evaluations to ensure competitive and equitable compensation, reducing turnover caused by pay disparities.

- Provide incentives for professional development, such as salary increases or stipends linked to certifications, licenses, and specialized assignments, to retain top talent and promote long-term commitment.

Objectives:

- **Develop and implement a comprehensive employer branding strategy** that highlights the organization's values, work culture, and competitive pay structure. Leverage digital marketing, social media outreach, and employee testimonials to enhance visibility, with the goal of doubling the number of job applications (100% increase) within one year.

- **Revise, streamline, and digitize the recruitment workflow** to improve efficiency and candidate experience. Incorporate data-driven compensation benchmarking and automated tracking systems to ensure a seamless hiring process, aiming for an average time-to-hire of six weeks or less from application submission within one year.

- **Strengthen mentorship and career development initiatives** by introducing structured training programs, leadership pathways, and mentorship pairings. Establish clear progression criteria and feedback mechanisms to improve employee satisfaction with their readiness for advancement opportunities by 50% within one year.

- **Expand and formalize the employee recognition program** by implementing a structured awards system, peer-nominated recognitions, and performance-based incentives. Tie rewards to key performance indicators (KPIs) and organizational goals, with the aim of increasing employee engagement scores by 50% within one year.

A strong and well-supported workforce is essential for the community, county leaders, and the fire department, ensuring the department can meet both current and future demands with a diverse, well-compensated, and highly effective team.

For the community, this means enhanced public safety, with a skilled, and motivated emergency response force delivering faster and more effective services.

For county leaders, it aligns with broader objectives of improving quality of life, promoting equitable representation, and maintaining fiscal responsibility by reducing turnover and training costs through talent retention.

For the fire department, prioritizing workforce development strengthens operational effectiveness by improving recruitment, retention, and compensation, fostering a stable and committed team capable of handling fire, medical, and rescue operations in Chatham County.

By expanding recruitment efforts, streamlining hiring processes, and investing in retention initiatives, CCFD can attract a diverse and qualified applicant pool while maintaining a well-trained and motivated team. These efforts support long-term sustainability, positions CCFD as an employer of choice, and ultimately lead to improved service delivery and stronger community protection.

Core Strategy: Enhancing Organizational Resilience

Priority 2 - Adaptability, Efficiency, and Growth: Establish an innovative, adaptable organizational environment that fosters organizational resilience, driving continuous improvement and service excellence.

Goals:

1. Encourage a Culture of Innovation:

- Integrate data-driven insights and research to promote innovative solutions to operational challenges.

- Encourage a culture of continuous learning and professional development by utilizing workforce strategies to equip staff with the skills and knowledge needed for innovation.

- Establish a structured feedback mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives, leveraging input from personnel and the community to drive continuous refinement and improvement.

2. Establish Continuous Improvement Programs:

- Perform regular reviews of policies, procedures, and processes to ensure they remain aligned with organizational strategies, priorities, goals, and objectives, while meeting the evolving needs of the community.

- Conduct systematic self-assessments using the Commission on Fire Accreditation International's (CFAI) Fire and Emergency Services Self-Assessment Manual to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- Develop structured feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to gather insights from employees and the community and translate input into actionable improvements.

3. Strengthen Commitment to Service Excellence:

- Pursue CFAI accreditation to benchmark CCFD's performance against international standards, demonstrating a commitment to excellence.

- Continuously evaluate and improve service delivery by tracking key performance metrics (e.g., response times, customer feedback) and using data-driven insights to refine operations.

- Foster a culture of accountability, financial stewardship, and continuous learning by recognizing outstanding service, encouraging staff-driven improvements, and integrating best practices from industry leaders like the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

Objectives:

- **Launch a continuous quality improvement program** within year one of plan approval using the CPSE/CFAI model.

- **Attain CFAI accreditation** within four years, following a structured implementation plan with clear milestones.

  Four-Year Accreditation Implementation Plan:

  - Year 1 (2025): Maintain registered agency status with CFAI, complete the self-assessment, and initiate the Community Risk Assessment (CRA).

  - Year 2 (2026): Finalize the CRA, develop the Standards of Cover (SOC), and refine the strategic plan based on CRA findings.

  - Year 3 (2027): Apply for "Candidate Agency" status and address any areas identified for improvement.

  - Year 4 (2028): Prepare for peer assessment, finalize all required documentation, and submit for full accreditation.

Upon approval, CCFD will initiate the next step for CFAI accreditation through CPSE, which will directly improve its Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classification (PPC). This accreditation process will lead to enhanced operational efficiency by streamlining internal practices, optimizing resource allocation, and implementing best practices across the department, ultimately ensuring the highest standard of service delivery and more effective outcomes for the community.

Achieving CPSE/CFAI accreditation will have a significant positive impact on the community, supporting county leaders, and the fire department by fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and service excellence. For the community, accreditation ensures enhanced fire protection and

emergency services through data-driven decision-making and rigorous standards. This translates to more efficient response times, improved service quality, and greater public trust.

For the county leaders, the accreditation process promotes operational transparency and accountability, ensuring that taxpayer resources are being used effectively and in line with best practices. By actively engaging staff in committees and work groups, the county fosters collaboration and innovation, leading to more effective solutions for local challenges. Accreditation also demonstrates a commitment to professional excellence, positioning the county as a leader in fire services and risk reduction.

For CCFD, accreditation leads to higher operational standards and enhances internal processes, including the regular review of policies and procedures and the establishment of formal feedback mechanisms. It provides staff with the tools and training necessary for implementing innovative practices and managing change, while setting a clear path for achieving service excellence. Through this process, the department strengthens its ability to monitor performance metrics, refine service delivery, and remain accountable to both the community and the county.

Core Strategy: Leveraging Data for Smarter Decisions

Priority 3 - Collection, Analysis, and Application: Ensure full integration of data collection and analytics systems to accurately measure and evaluate operational performance.

Goals:

1. Fully Integrate First Due and Transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS):

    - Prioritize the full integration of First Due with the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and payroll systems to ensure seamless data collection, operational efficiency, and accurate reporting.

    - Prepare for the adoption of the NERIS in 2025, replacing National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), by establishing a transition team, training staff, and ensuring compliance with new reporting standards.

    - Develop a structured six-month implementation plan with clear milestones to ensure systems integration, staff readiness, and operational alignment.

2. Establish Data-Driven Performance Metrics:

    - Define key performance metrics for critical operational areas, including response times, resource allocation efficiency, incident resolution rates, and customer satisfaction.

    - Leverage First Due and NERIS to automate performance tracking and generate real-time analytics for informed decision-making.

    - Conduct regular reviews of performance data, adjusting benchmarks and processes to drive continuous improvement, accountability, and service excellence.

Objectives:

    - **Achieve a minimum of 95% data accuracy** and consistency across all operational reports within one year after necessary system integrations.

    - **Publish accurate, detailed, and timely monthly performance reports** within three months of full integration to assess operational effectiveness and enhance transparency and accountability.

- **Leverage performance data** to drive informed decision-making, continuously improving service delivery and optimizing operational outcomes.

Accurate and timely data are essential for making informed decisions that directly impact on the community, county leadership, fire department operations, and overall fiscal accountability. In an emergency services environment, real-time data collection, analysis, and application are critical for optimizing resource allocation, enhancing operational efficiency, and supporting strategic planning. These data-driven decisions ensure that personnel, apparatus, and equipment are deployed effectively to meet community needs.

For CCFD, integrating reliable data into daily operations enhances service delivery by improving response times, refining staffing models, and ensuring seamless operations. This strengthens public safety by enabling faster, more effective emergency responses while also prioritizing firefighter safety. County leaders benefit from transparent, data-informed decision-making that aligns public safety initiatives with broader governmental objectives.

Additionally, data-driven decision-making is key to fiscal accountability. By leveraging performance metrics to assess operational efficiency, CCFD can ensure that resources are allocated effectively, and taxpayer dollars are used responsibly. This approach helps reduce unnecessary expenditure, eliminate redundancies, and improve cost-effectiveness across all operations. Accurate financial tracking, combined with performance analytics, strengthens the department's ability to justify budget requests and operational adjustments. Regularly publishing performance reports further promotes transparency, enabling county leaders to make informed, fiscally responsible decisions that support long-term sustainability and improved outcomes for the entire community.

Core Strategy: Optimizing Resources for Maximum Impact

Priority 4 - Strategic Allocation and Deployment: Enhance CCFD staffing, resource allocation, and deployment strategies by aligning ISO criteria, state and national fire service standards, and data-driven community risk assessments. This approach enhances operational efficiency, reduces unnecessary expenditure, and ensures a cost-effective, responsive service model that minimizes community risk, improves emergency response times, lowers insurance ratings, and meets the community's needs.

Goals:

1. Conduct a Comprehensive Resource Assessment:

- <u>Completed</u>: A thorough evaluation of CCFD's current resource allocation was conducted. This assessment included a comparative review of fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials, behavioral health, medical support, and community risk reduction. Findings were measured against community risks, response data, state and national standards, identifying service gaps and areas for improvement.

2. Optimize Deployment Strategies:

- Reallocate and enhance resources based on current response data, geographic risk profiles, and national standards to ensure timely and effective service to the community.

- Finalize mutual and automatic aid agreements with willing fire departments and establish joint response protocols to enhance collaborative efforts.

- Continuously assess and improve deployment strategies by conducting regular drills, tabletop exercises, and joint training with mutual and automatic aid partners to enhance overall efficiency.

Objectives:

- **Increase resources for the Community Paramedic/Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) services** to expand operational capacity and improve its ability to respond to behavioral health crises and medical emergencies. If approved, CCFD will implement 24-hour coverage in the first year of this four-year plan, enhancing response times and providing comprehensive care. This expansion includes crisis intervention, medical support during fire operations, and community resource referrals for both residents and employees. Strengthening these resources will enable CCFD to address critical service gaps, reduce strain on law enforcement, hospitals, and medical services, and enhance overall public health and safety. *

- **Establish a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division** within CCFD to enhance public safety through fire inspections, code compliance, investigations, and life safety education. If approved, this division will, in the first year of the four-year plan, conduct annual inspections for all applicable structures, perform fire investigations, and engage at least 50% of at-risk communities annually through targeted education initiatives. By addressing critical service gaps and improving compliance with safety regulations, this initiative will strengthen community resilience and enhance the overall quality of life for Chatham County residents. *

- **Increase resources for administrative and support services** within CCFD to improve service delivery while optimizing internal operations for greater efficiency and effectiveness. If approved, in the first year of this four-year plan, CCFD will increase staff to implement a more structured approach to community engagement, service coordination, and operational readiness, ensuring that resources are allocated strategically and responsibly. By reinforcing internal support functions, CCFD will build a more resilient, efficient, and community-focused fire department that meets both operational demands and public safety needs. *

- **Increase operational personnel** within CCFD by adding lieutenants to all engines, captains to all trucks, additional battalion chiefs, and a safety officer per shift to enhance field supervision, risk reduction, and incident management. If approved, CCFD will begin phased implementation in the first year, adopting a structured approach to strengthening command oversight, improving firefighter safety, and ensuring more effective emergency response operations. By addressing leadership gaps in the field, CCFD will develop a more resilient, efficient, and strategically coordinated fire department that reduces risk while meeting operational demands and community safety needs. *

- **Achieve closer compliance with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 staffing, turnout, travel, resource deployment, and alarm processing standards** within three years by implementing this plan optimizing personnel allocation, station locations, resource allocations, and mutual/automatic aid agreements. The ability to meet these requirements is contingent upon the approval and execution of this plan, ensuring a safer, more efficient operational environment, improved ISO Public Protection Classification, and enhanced emergency response capabilities to meet the community's evolving needs. *

Effective resource allocation and strong support services are essential to ensuring the right resources are in place to protect the community, support county leadership's vision, and advance CCFD's mission. By aligning with ISO criteria, national standards, response data, and community risk assessments, CCFD aims to deploy resources strategically, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

Proper resource allocation enhances response times, strengthens public safety, and improves operational effectiveness by addressing service gaps and meeting the needs of a growing community. Key strategies include continuously assessing current resources, optimizing deployment based on risk, expanding mutual and automatic aid agreements, and refining these efforts through training drills and evaluations.

These improvements will not only enhance the county's ISO PPC but also help address the increasing demand for alternative behavioral health resources. Additionally, they will bolster firefighter and community safety by ensuring adequate resources for community risk reduction programs and emergency response. Ultimately, these efforts align with the county's mission to provide essential services that enhance the quality of life for everyone in Chatham County.

Core Strategy: Strengthening Community Connections

Priority 5 - Engagement, Education, and Outreach: Strengthen community relationships by enhancing visibility and engagement through proactive outreach initiatives.

Goals:

1. Enhance Community Engagement:

- Increase participation in community events and programs.

- Utilize online marketing and self-service resources to promote ongoing community engagement.

- Develop educational outreach programs focused on fire safety and prevention, mental health awareness, crisis intervention, substance abuse education, stress management, and coping skills.

2. Improve Communication with the Public:

- Establish clear, consistent, and reliable external communication methods to diversify outlets and ensure easy access to information for external stakeholders.

- Develop a comprehensive social media strategy that utilizes multiple platforms to engage with community members and provide timely updates on events, programs, and resources.

- Implement a structured schedule of quarterly community feedback sessions held at various accessible locations and in different formats, including in-person meetings, virtual webinars, and focus groups.

Objectives:

- **Increase online marketing efforts and self-service resources** within one year to enhance community engagement, boost participation in events and programs, and encourage ongoing interaction with residents.

- **Develop and launch educational outreach initiatives** within two years, focusing on fire safety, prevention, mental health awareness, crisis intervention, suicide prevention, substance abuse education, stress management, and coping skills to increase community awareness and participation.

- **Achieving a 90% positive feedback rate** on outreach initiatives within two years by establishing regular community feedback sessions, diversifying communication channels, and leveraging social media and other platforms to share updates and information.

Promoting a stronger, more positive relationship between the fire department and the community is essential for several reasons.

For the community, increased engagement fosters trust, enhancing the department's effectiveness in emergencies and improving overall safety. Through participation in local events and educational outreach programs focused on fire safety, mental health awareness, and substance abuse education, the fire department becomes a trusted resource, helping residents feel more connected and informed.

For county leaders, a proactive fire department strengthens public confidence and community cohesion, aligning with broader public safety and health goals. This partnership not only enhances residents' quality of life but also helps leaders make informed decisions that address community needs.

For the fire department, increased visibility and open communication build a positive reputation, leading to greater community support and resources. By developing structured feedback mechanisms and a comprehensive social media strategy, the department can remain responsive to community concerns and suggestions, improving service delivery and fostering continuous improvement.

Overall, these initiatives create a synergistic relationship in which the fire department and community work collaboratively toward shared goals of safety, well-being, and resilience.

Core Strategy: Improving Internal Communications

Priority 6 - Transparency, Collaboration, and Efficiency: Strengthen internal systems to foster effective, transparent, and interactive communication within the CCFD.

Goals:

1. Strengthen Internal Communication Channels:

   - Implement a centralized communication platform to streamline information sharing across all ranks and divisions.

   - Establish regular internal briefings, newsletters, and updates to keep personnel informed on policy changes, operational updates, and strategic initiatives.

   - Develop a structured feedback mechanism that allows employees to provide input on department policies, procedures, and initiatives.

2. Improve Data Accessibility and Utilization

   - Integrate data with internal reporting tools to enhance decision-making and operational transparency.

   - Utilize real-time dashboards for key performance indicators, including incident response times, staffing levels, and resource allocation.

   - Train personnel on data-driven decision-making to ensure staff can effectively interpret and utilize information for service improvements.

Objectives:

- **Implement the communication platform in all stations** using digital displays by the end of second quarter 2025.

- **Conduct quarterly employee feedback surveys** to assess and refine communication strategies.

- **Achieve a 90% internal communication satisfaction rate** within one year.

Effective and interactive communication within CCFD is essential for building strong relationships with the community, county leaders, and department personnel. Strengthening internal communication systems ensures accurate, up-to-date information flows seamlessly across all levels, enhancing operational efficiency and safety.

To achieve this, CCFD plans to enhance records management systems such as NERIS, First Due, and to fully implement the First Arriving communication platform, providing personnel with immediate access to critical information and improving organizational transparency. Additionally, establishing clear communication channels and protocols will foster open dialogue, facilitate timely updates, and support collaborative problem-solving.

Core Strategy: Advancing Professional Growth

Priority 7 - Training, Development, and Leadership: Enhance CCFD's professional development model to further support, encourage, and foster career growth, creating a highly skilled and capable Effective Response Force (ERF). This expansion will ensure personnel are well-equipped to meet both current and future service demands, strengthening CCFD's ability to provide high-quality emergency response and community support.

Goals:

1. Develop Comprehensive Training Programs:

- Offer regular professional development workshops and specialized training sessions.

- Expand access to external training programs and certification opportunities to enhance skills and expertise.

2. Establish Clear Career Pathways:

- Maintain the Line of Progression for all roles within CCFD.

- Expand mentorship and coaching programs to support professional growth and development.

Objectives:

- **Increase participation in professional development programs** by 50% within one year through targeted engagement and accessibility initiatives.

- **Improve the likelihood that 40% of key role promotions are filled by internal candidates** within two years by identifying, developing, and promoting qualified individuals from within the organization.

Investing in professional development is essential for building a highly skilled and adaptable emergency response force capable of meeting the community's evolving needs. By expanding its professional

development model, CCFD seeks to support career growth, enhance firefighter expertise, and cultivate leadership within the department. These initiatives not only improve individual capabilities but also strengthen overall operational effectiveness, ensuring higher-quality service delivery for the community and its leaders.

Core Strategy: Prioritizing Health and Safety

Priority 8 - Total Wellness & Cancer Risk Reduction: Expand the current physical fitness, wellness, and the carcinogen exposure reduction model to provide comprehensive support for a healthy workforce and reduce the risk of cancer in fire personnel.

Goals:

1. Enhance Wellness Programs:

- Maintain the current annual medical evaluation and fitness assessment and include cancer reduction screening, testing, and monitoring for early detection and prevention.

- Implement protocols for regular decontamination of gear and equipment to minimize carcinogen exposure.

- Provide fitness and wellness programs that support healthy living and stress reduction techniques.

- Provide access to mental health resources, recognizing the role of stress management in reducing cancer risk and overall health.

2. Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:

- Encourage participation in fitness activities and challenges that focus on maintaining a healthy weight, improving cardiovascular health, and reducing cancer risks.

- Provide educational resources on nutrition, wellness, and carcinogen exposure prevention to empower firefighters to make informed lifestyle choices that reduce cancer risk.

- Foster a culture of health and safety, ensuring firefighters follow proper procedures to reduce exposure to harmful toxins during and after fire incidents.

Objectives:

- **Achieve 90% compliance with established decontamination protocols** within six months.

- Maintain the current annual medical evaluation and fitness assessment program, while **integrating cancer screenings** for early detection and prevention in year one.

- **Implement a "clean cab" protocol in fire department vehicles** within six months.

- **Implement "clean station" protocols across all fire stations** in year one to minimize carcinogen exposure and ensure proper decontamination procedures are followed.

Expanding the current physical fitness, wellness, and carcinogen exposure reduction protocols within the fire department is crucial for fostering a healthier workforce, enhancing community safety, and supporting county leaders' initiatives for public health. This comprehensive approach addresses the

unique challenges faced by firefighters, who are at heightened risk of cancer due to occupational exposure to hazardous materials.

Enhancing Wellness Programs is the cornerstone of this initiative, aiming to integrate cancer reduction screenings and decontamination protocols into routine medical evaluations. By prioritizing early detection and prevention, CCFD can proactively safeguard its personnel's health. Additionally, personalized wellness plans and access to mental health resources underscore the importance of holistic well-being, recognizing the critical link between stress management and cancer risk.

Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle is equally vital. Encouraging firefighters to engage in fitness activities and educational initiatives empowers them to make informed lifestyle choices that mitigate cancer risks. Cultivating a culture of health and safety ensures that all firefighters adhere to best practices for reducing exposure to toxins during and after incidents, fostering a safer environment for both personnel and the community.

The proposed objectives, including achieving high compliance rates with decontamination protocols and increasing participation in cancer screenings, reflect the fire department's commitment to excellence in health and safety. By implementing these strategies, the department not only enhances the well-being of its firefighters but also demonstrates leadership in community health initiatives. Ultimately, this expansion will reduce healthcare costs, improve workforce readiness, and ensure a robust response to emergencies, reinforcing the department's dedication to service excellence and community trust.

Core Strategy: Investing in Infrastructure

Priority 9 - Facility Infrastructure Enhancement: Develop a comprehensive facility infrastructure improvement plan to meet the current and future service needs of the community, with a focus on closing service gaps caused by outdated, inadequately equipped, and improperly located fire stations that fail to meet NFPA 1710 travel time standards.

Goals:

1. Prioritize Renovation and Relocation of Facilities:

    - Renovate or replace aging and inadequately equipped fire stations to ensure compliance with NFPA 1710 response standards, providing facilities that adequately support personnel and operational needs.

    - Relocate fire stations that do not meet the 240-second travel time for first-due engines, 360 seconds for second-due engines, and 480/610 seconds for full alarms, ensuring optimal response coverage and service delivery.

    - Implement a phased plan for facility improvements and relocations that aligns with community growth, risk assessments, and response data to ensure the strategic placement of stations for optimal service delivery.

2. Secure Funding and Resources:

    - Identify and pursue funding opportunities through federal, state, and local grants, as well as public-private partnerships, to support facility relocation and upgrades.

- Allocate budget resources strategically to prioritize facility improvements and station relocations that address service delivery gaps, focusing on high-risk or underserved areas.

Objectives:

- **Complete at least three major station relocation projects within two years**, prioritizing stations that contribute to non-compliance with NFPA 1710 travel time standards.

- **Improve NFPA 1710 travel times within three years** by repositioning stations to allow first due units to arrive on scene within 240 seconds for fire incidents, 90% of the time, and full alarms within 480 seconds for low and medium hazards, and 610 seconds for high hazards. *

- **Enhance overall service efficiency over the next three to seven years by upgrading outdated stations and relocating mislocated stations**, thereby improving emergency response times, optimizing operations, and providing better coverage to the community.

Implementing the *CCFD Facilities Infrastructure Enhancement Plan* is critical to addressing significant service gaps caused by outdated, misallocated, and inadequately equipped fire stations. Many existing stations lack the capacity to house the personnel, apparatus, and equipment required for modern fire services, severely limiting operational efficiency. Several stations also fail to meet NFPA 1710 travel time standards, resulting in delayed emergency response, increased property damage, and greater risk to public and firefighter safety. These deficiencies lead to inconsistent coverage, higher insurance costs for residents. Without decisive action, these issues will continue to hinder the department's ability to provide timely and effective emergency services.

To mitigate these risks, the department must prioritize the renovation and relocation of facilities that do not support current and future service demands. Many stations must be substantially renovated or replaced to ensure they can accommodate the necessary staffing, apparatus, and equipment required for modern emergency response. Renovating aging stations will provide personnel with functional facilities that support operational readiness and firefighter health and safety. Relocating misallocated stations will enhance emergency response by aligning resources with community needs and ensuring first-due units meet the 240-second travel time requirement for fire suppression. A phased approach to facility improvements and station relocations will allow for strategic investments that maximize service efficiency while minimizing financial strain.

Additionally, securing control of properly located stations through ownership transfer or purchase from Southside Community Fire Protection, Inc. dba Chatham Emergency Services is essential to maintaining long-term stability and ensuring continued service to the community. Without full control, the department risks losing access to key infrastructure, further disrupting emergency response capabilities. By implementing a comprehensive facility improvement plan, the department will optimize operations, improve response times, enhance firefighter safety, and strengthen the community's overall resilience.

Core Strategy: Enhancing Operational Readiness

Priority 10 - Equipment and Apparatus Improvement: Establish a comprehensive equipment and apparatus maintenance and replacement plan to address current gaps in service delivery caused by high mileage and less dependable apparatus, ensuring CCFD can meet present and future service needs efficiently and effectively.

Goals:

1. Develop Maintenance Schedules:

- Implement regular maintenance and inspection protocols for all apparatus and equipment, ensuring early detection of potential issues.

- Track maintenance history and performance data to predict future maintenance and replacement needs, reducing downtime caused by unreliable equipment.

2. Plan for Apparatus / Equipment Replacement:

- Establish a replacement schedule based on national standards, apparatus lifespan, mileage, and equipment usage, prioritizing units that are causing gaps in service delivery.

- Secure funding for replacing high-mileage, undependable apparatus to eliminate operational disruptions and improve response times.

- Integrate equipment needs into the overall resource reallocation and deployment strategies, as outlined in Priority Goal 4, to ensure that all units are fully equipped and operational for effective community response.

Objectives:

- **Ensure 100% compliance with equipment and apparatus maintenance schedules**, fully meeting NFPA standards within one year.

- **Reduce equipment downtime by 50%** within two years through proactive maintenance practices and timely replacement of outdated equipment.

- **Replace high-mileage and unreliable apparatus** according to the equipment and apparatus replacement plan within three years, eliminating operational disruptions and improving response times by 25% to ensure reliable, efficient service delivery to the community.

Establishing a comprehensive equipment and apparatus maintenance and replacement plan is crucial for the fire department to address current service delivery gaps caused by high mileage and undependable apparatus. This initiative not only ensures that firefighters have reliable equipment but also significantly enhances community safety and response capabilities.

Planning for timely replacement of aging apparatus based on national standards and usage metrics will further enhance operational efficiency. Securing funding for these replacements is essential to eliminate any gaps in service delivery, ultimately improving response times and ensuring that all units are fully equipped for effective community response. This proactive approach not only minimizes operational disruptions but also fosters trust within the community, as residents can be assured that their fire department is prepared to respond effectively to emergencies.

Overall, this comprehensive maintenance and replacement strategy will not only enhance the operational capabilities of the fire department but also strengthen community confidence in the department's ability to respond swiftly and effectively to emergencies, thereby promoting a safer environment for all.

REVIEW OF PRIORITIES

The ten priorities outlined in this strategic plan reflect the CCFD's commitment to improving its services and adapting to the evolving needs of the community. The high level review outlined below provides a summary of the key actions needed to support the strategic plan and ensure progress in each of the prioritized areas:

1. **Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention:** To maintain a diverse, effective, and well-compensated workforce, CCFD will enhance its recruitment campaigns, streamline the hiring process, and implement career development and recognition programs that motivate and retain qualified employees. Emphasis will be placed on competitive pay, diverse recruitment, and reducing hiring time, with measurable increases in job applications and employee satisfaction.

2. **Adaptability, Efficiency, and Growth:** CCFD will foster an environment where innovation thrives by encouraging staff participation in operational improvements, integrating continuous feedback mechanisms, and focusing on service excellence. Key objectives include the launch of a continuous quality improvement program and securing Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) accreditation within four years.

3. **Collection, Analysis, and Application:** Enhancing the accuracy and consistency of data will allow CCFD to better evaluate its performance and make informed decisions. Upgrading data systems and developing key performance metrics will enable comprehensive operational reporting, which will guide improvements in service delivery.

4. **Strategic Allocation and Deployment:** CCFD will optimize its resource allocation based on national standards, response data, and risk assessments. A critical part of this effort is enhancing community paramedic and behavioral health services, improving effective response force, increase of front-line fire leadership positions, and establishing a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division. These changes will improve response times and resource distribution, addressing critical gaps in service delivery while improving the ISO PPC, operational safety and efficiency.

5. **Engagement, Education, and Outreach:** CCFD aims to strengthen its relationship with the community by increasing its presence at local events, improving communication, and launching outreach programs on fire safety, mental health, and substance abuse prevention. Expanding online resources and achieving a 90% positive community feedback rate within this area.

6. **Transparency, Collaboration, and Efficiency:** Enhancing communication tools and protocols within CCFD will improve operational efficiency and transparency. Implementing platforms such as First Due and First Arriving will ensure all personnel have access to up-to-date information, with the aim of achieving a 90% internal communication satisfaction rate.

7. **Training, Development, and Leadership:** Expanding the professional development model will support CCFD employees in their career advancement. Offering additional training opportunities, mentoring, and clear career pathways will help increase participation in development programs, promote internal advancement, and prepare for succession.

8. **Total Wellness Initiative and Cancer Risk Reduction**: CCFD working with the Occupational Safety, Risk Management, and Disability Services and the Human Resources Departments will prioritize firefighter health by enhancing wellness programs, incorporating cancer screening, and reducing carcinogen exposure. The fire department aims to increase the wellness program participation, reduce absenteeism, and minimize cancer risks within the workforce.

9. **Facility Infrastructure Enhancement:** CCFD working with the Facilities and Other County Departments will address gaps in service delivery by renewing, replacing, and strategically relocating fire stations to meet NFPA 1710 standards. Prioritizing facility projects in high-demand areas will ensure timely responses to emergencies and better coverage across the county.

10. **Equipment and Apparatus Improvement:** CCFD, working closely with the Fleet Department, will develop a comprehensive plan to ensure reliable apparatus and equipment. Implementing regular maintenance schedules and replacing outdated units will reduce downtime and improve response times, with the goal of enhancing service reliability.

In conclusion, the CCFD is fully committed to its mission of safeguarding the community through proactive risk reduction, emergency response, and healthcare services. Our strategic plan outlines a clear vision for CCFD to lead the fire service industry in service excellence, innovation, and community collaboration. By focusing on key initiatives such as workforce development, resource optimization, and community engagement, we are laying the groundwork for a more resilient and responsive department, capable of meeting the evolving needs of Chatham County.

The success of this strategic plan is built on our commitment to continuous improvement, integrity, and compassion, ensuring that we provide the highest level of service to those we protect. As we move forward, we invite you to review the Supporting Documents section at the end of the plan for detailed information on our priority goals, strategies, and objectives, which provide a roadmap for achieving operational excellence and sustaining long-term success.

Together, we can create a safer, stronger community and continue to make Chatham County a great place to live, work, and play.

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APPENDIX A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

2022 ISO Audit Summary and Recommendations for Full Credit (revised 12-28-2023)

FSRS Feature	Credit Available	2015	2024		Notes:	CRITICAL POINTS TO CONSIDER
Emergency Communications						County 911
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	3	2.4	3		Score improved - Full credit	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	4	3.64	3.77	0.23	Score improved; full credit except alarm processing (14.21 out of 20). Full credit requires improving alarm processing times.	3.8 Based on CAD data the transfer to County 911 has increased the average call processing time for fire calls over 300%. This increase in processing time effects overall response and will result in ISO points loss in the ECC section unless corrected. Currently Pulsepoint is the crutch we rely on to ensure timely alarm pre-notification.
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuit	3	3	1.95	1.05	Scored less - Information provided in the 2015 report was incorrect which elevated the previous score (page 11). Full credit requires to improve/upgrade/replace the system requiring a secondary circuit and automatic failure notification system. The new CAD/Priority Dispatch and move to County 911 may help address this issue.	2.4
	10	**9.04**	**8.72**	**1.28**	Lost 0.32 points with potential to gain 1.28 points	9.2 0.48
Fire Department						
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6	5.96	6		Score improved - Full credit	
523. Credit for Reserved Pumpers	0.5	0.49	0.5		Score improved - Full credit	
532. Credit for Pump Capacity	3	3	3		Score is same - Full credit	
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4	3.21	2.39	1.61	Scored less - The information provided on the number of ladders and service units for the 2015 report was incorrect which elevated the previous score (page 14). Full credit requires 6 trucks (Stations 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10). However, strategically relocating fire stations can optimize aerial unit placement, improve coverage, reduce response times, enhancing overall service delivery and reducing the number of aerial apparatus required.	Implement submitted 2024-2028 CCFD Strategic Plan.
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Truck	0.5	0.47	0.5		Score improved - Full credit	
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	10	6.37	4.69	5.31	Scored less - Full credit requires relocation of Stations 1, 2, 7, 10, 12, 13, and 14, increase personnel, and increase number of trucks to adequately cover response area.	Implement submitted 2024-2028 CCFD Strategic Plan.
571. Credit for Company Personnel	15	10.1	5.6	9.4	Scored less - Previous numbers included EMS personnel which elevated the previous score (page 16). Full credit requires increasing staffing to meet ISO ERF requirements (NFPA 1710).	Implement submitted 2024-2028 CCFD Strategic Plan.
581. Credit for Training	9	6.85	8.66	0.34	Score improved - Full credit requires all volunteers members on the roster to complete the initial requirements and 216 annual training hours. Note: All paid FD personnel exceed these requirements.	Conduct a volunteer program cost-benefit study to better understand its overall cost and value to the community.
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2	2	2		Score is same - Full credit	
	50	**38.4**	**33.3**	**16.66**	Lost 5.08 points with potential to gain 16.66 points.	

2022 ISO Audit Summary and Recommendations for Full Credit (revised 12-28-2023)

FSRS Feature	Credit Available	2015	2024		Notes:	CRITICAL POINTS TO CONSIDER
616. Credit for Supply System	30	25.7	14.7	15.32	Scored less - The information provided on the number of hydrants for the 2015 report was incorrect which elevated the previous score (page 20). Full credit requires increase in number of hydrants throughout the county OR improve the non-hydranted area FD response capabilities. This would require additional water tenders and personnel to immediately deploy the tenders.	Implement submitted 2024-2028 CCFD Strategic Plan.
621. Credit for Hydrants	3	3	3		Score is same - Full credit	
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	7	5.26	7		Score improved - Full credit	
	40	33.9	24.7		Lost 9.26 points with potential to gain 15.32 points	
Other						
Divergence		-1.6	-1		Score improved	
1050. Community Risk Reduction	5.5	3.95	4.67	0.83	Score improved - Full credit requires a substancial increase in annual fire inspections, and fire safety education outreach to address community risk reduction. To address the community risk reduction program gap in the county, it is recommended to establish a Community Risk Reduction Division. This division would include a public safety education coordinator, two inspectors, one inspector/plans examiner, and a fire investigator.	Implement submitted 2024-2028 CCFD Strategic Plan.
	105.5	83.8	70.4		Total lost 13.34 points with potential to gain 35.09 points	
		2/2X	3/3X			

TO: Michael Kaigler, County Manager
FROM: James Vickers, Fire Chief 𝐽𝒱
REFERENCE: Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan – Medical Services
DATE: 10/1/2024

Executive Summary

In accordance with Goal 4 of the *CCFD Strategic Plan 2024-2028*, this proposal seeks to expand the Community Paramedic/Behavioral Health Unit (CPBHU) of the Chatham County Fire Department (CCFD) to operate 24 hours a day. As the demand for behavioral health and drug addiction crisis interventions continues to grow, this expansion aims to close significant gaps in service to the community, provide critical rehabilitation support during CCFD fire operations, and enhance services for county employees. Currently, the CPBHU operates from 0700 to 1700, seven days a week, addressing crises involving mental health, substance abuse, suicide, and overdoses. Extending operational hours and responsibilities is crucial to meet community needs and support CCFD during fire operations. This initiative aligns with Chatham County's mission to protect and serve the public and provide essential services to improve the quality of life, and the vision to make Chatham County, Georgia, the best place to live, work, and play,

Identified Service Gaps and Needs - Medical Services

1. **Limited Operating Hours**

   The CPBHU's limited hours leave significant gaps in service, especially during late-night and early-morning hours when behavioral health crises often arise. Expanding to a 24-hour service will ensure timely intervention and that no crisis goes unaddressed.

2. **Insufficient On-Scene Medical Support**

   Firefighters encounter significant health risks during operations, such as dehydration, heat stress, and smoke inhalation. Currently, reliance on external EMS has been inadequate due to frequent ambulance unavailability and has resulted in avoidable workers' compensation claims for basic rehabilitation needs. Establishing a dedicated 24-hour CPBHU will provide essential on-site medical and rehabilitation support, enhancing firefighter health and safety, and reducing these unnecessary claims.

3. **Inconsistent Behavioral Health Staffing**

   Currently, behavioral health clinician services are provided part-time by contracted student clinicians, leading to inconsistency and limited expertise in complex crisis situations. To improve support for both the community and CCFD personnel, reallocating contract funds to hire a full-time licensed clinician with trauma certification is recommended. A full-time clinician would ensure consistent, expert care and enable the CPBHU to handle complex cases more effectively.

Expanded Responsibilities of the CPBHU

1. Firefighter Rehabilitation and Medical Support:

   The expanded CPBHU will provide on-site medical care during firefighting operations, reducing unnecessary hospital transport for minor injuries. This will lower healthcare costs and reduce workers' compensation claims by offering immediate treatment for dehydration, heat exhaustion, and minor trauma on the scene.

2. Behavioral Health Crisis Assessment and Medical Clearance:

   Specialty-trained paramedics and behavioral health professionals will conduct on-scene crisis assessments, focusing on de-escalation and medical clearance for alternate destinations, such as mental health facilities or rehabilitation centers. This approach will reduce emergency room visits and avoid unnecessary jail admissions, ensuring individuals in crisis receive appropriate care.

3. Referrals to Long-Term Resources:

   The CPBHU will actively connect individuals with long-term support services, including housing assistance, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, and primary healthcare providers. By diverting individuals from the 911 system and emergency rooms, the CPBHU will contribute to better outcomes for those in need.

4. Peer Support for County Employees:

   The expanded CPBHU can provide confidential mental health counseling and trauma-informed care for county employees, addressing workplace stress and offering critical incident debriefings. This service will be available across all county departments through an appointment-based model, ensuring comprehensive support for mental health and well-being for the workforce.

5. Telehealth Services for Crisis Support:

   The BHU clinician will provide telehealth capabilities to connect individuals with remote mental health professionals for real-time assessments. This will improve access to specialized care, enhancing the quality of crisis interventions, de-escalation efforts, and medical clearances.

Community Benefits

The expansion of the CPBHU to 24-hour service will significantly enhance the health and safety of the community, firefighters, and county employees.

Key Benefits

1. Increased Access to CPBHU:

   The 24-hour CPBHU will ensure timely interventions for behavioral health emergencies,

improving the overall well-being of Chatham County residents, especially during overnight and early morning hours.

2. Improved Firefighter Health and Safety:

On-scene medical support will reduce unnecessary ambulance transports and hospital visits, thereby decreasing medical costs and workers' compensation claims. Immediate rehabilitation and care during fire operations will greatly enhance firefighter safety and operational efficiency.

3. Reduced EMS Dependence and Lower Costs:

CPBHU's expanded capabilities will lessen the strain on EMS by providing crisis interventions and medical clearances directly on-site. This will help avoid emergency room visits and reduce overall healthcare and emergency response costs.

4. Comprehensive Mental Health Resources for County Employees:

The addition of peer support and counseling services will enhance mental health resources for county employees, reducing workplace stress and offering trauma-informed care after critical incidents. This proactive approach will foster a healthier, more resilient workforce.

Overview of Resource and Equipment Needs for the CPBHU

To ensure the success of the proposed expansion of the CPBHU to a 24-hour service, adequate resources and equipment must be provided for the expanded services. The expanded BHU will require the following:

1. Office Space and Technology:

   o The CPBHU expansion will necessitate additional office space to accommodate the four paramedics and the full-time behavioral health clinician.

   o Each office should be equipped with necessary technology, including phones, laptops, and secure internet access, to ensure smooth communication, case management, and coordination of crisis interventions.

   o Office furniture, such as desks, chairs, and secure filing cabinets, will also be needed to support the increased staff and their operational requirements.

2. Vehicles:

   o The expanded CPBHU will require an additional vehicle equipped for 24-hour crisis response, capable of handling the specific needs of behavioral health interventions and on-scene medical support during fire operations. This vehicle will allow the BHU to respond swiftly to emergencies throughout Chatham County, providing both crisis intervention and medical support.

3. Specialized Medical Equipment:

   o The CPBHU will need specialized medical equipment to monitor vitals and provide care for both behavioral health crises and firefighter rehabilitation. This equipment is crucial for assessing and treating conditions such as dehydration, heat exhaustion, and minor trauma on the scene, as well as supporting medical clearances during mental health interventions.

4. Salaries and Benefits:

   o Competitive salaries and benefits are required to attract and retain the specialized personnel needed for this expanded unit. This includes paramedics trained in behavioral health and firefighter rehabilitation, as well as a licensed behavioral health clinician certified in trauma care. Offering a competitive benefits package will help ensure that the CPBHU is staffed with professionals capable of handling complex crisis situations effectively.

Estimated Costs:

- Estimated cost for office setup (technology, furniture, etc.): $15,000

- Estimated cost for vehicles: $100,000

- Estimated cost of specialized equipment: $100,000

- Estimated salaries and benefits: $535,642

  Estimated total cost: $750,642

By providing these essential resources, the expanded CPBHU will be well-positioned to enhance the health, safety, and well-being of Chatham County residents, firefighters, and county employees. This investment will allow the CPBHU to operate efficiently and meet the growing demand for 24-hour behavioral health crisis interventions.

Conclusion

The proposed expansion of the CPBHU to a 24-hour service is a strategic and necessary investment in the health and safety of Chatham County's residents, firefighters, and county employees. By adding specialized paramedics and a full-time trauma-certified behavioral health clinician, this initiative will address critical service gaps, provide essential on-scene medical support, and improve overall crisis response capabilities.

This expansion aligns directly with Chatham County's mission to protect and serve the public while enhancing the quality of life for all residents. With the expanded CPBHU, we will not only ensure timely behavioral health interventions but also improve firefighter safety and reduce healthcare costs through immediate rehabilitation support during fire operations. Furthermore, the addition of peer support and

mental health resources will foster a healthier and more resilient workforce across all county departments.

We are confident that this initiative will bring long-term benefits, both financially and operationally, and will positively impact the community and our workforce. We look forward to discussing this important proposal with you further and working together to strengthen Chatham County as the best place to live, work, and play.

CHATHAM COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1249 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah GA 31406

Office 912-219-0420 ● https://fire.chathamcountyga.gov/

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CHATHAM COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1249 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah GA 31406

Office 912-219-0420 ● https://fire.chathamcountyga.gov/

TO: Michael Kaigler, County Manager
FROM: James Vickers, Fire Chief 𝒥𝒱
REFERENCE: Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan – Community Risk Reduction Division
DATE: 10/1/2024

Executive Summary

In accordance with Goal 4 of the *CCFD Strategic Plan 2024-2028*, this staffing plan proposes the establishment of a Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division within the Chatham County Fire Department (CCFD) in the first year of the department's strategic plan. The CRR division will consist of a Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshals, certified in fire inspection, fire investigation, and fire and life safety education. It is recommended that the current fire inspector be relocated from Building Safety and Regulatory Services to the fire department, where he can more effectively manage fire prevention strategies. The CRR Division will address gaps in fire inspection services, code enforcement, fire investigations, and community outreach identified in the Insurance Services Office (ISO) *Public Protection Classification Summary 2023 Report*.

The CRR division will serve as a proactive unit dedicated to fire prevention, hazard mitigation, and public education while also ensuring thorough fire investigations. This proactive approach is expected to reduce fire-related injuries, fatalities, and property loss. Additionally, it will ensure that Chatham County meets the growing demand for inspections, complies with state regulations, and engages the community in effective fire prevention strategies.

Identified Service Gaps and Needs – Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division

1. **Insufficient Fire Inspection and Code Enforcement Capacity**

   Currently, Chatham County relies on a single fire inspector within Building Safety and Regulatory Services to cover a large geographic area. This limited capacity leads to delays in inspection cycles and prevents comprehensive enforcement of fire codes across all buildings and businesses. Without adequate inspection resources, potential fire hazards and code violations may go unaddressed, increasing risks for both residents and property owners. Establishing a CRR division within CCFD with dedicated fire inspection staff would enable more efficient inspections, timely code enforcement, and better alignment with NFPA 1730 standards, which emphasize the importance of consistent inspections for community fire prevention.

2. **Lack of Dedicated Fire Investigation Resources**

   Currently, fire investigations are limited and often lack the necessary resources to promptly and accurately determine fire causes. Without dedicated fire investigators, CCFD is unable to identify and address fire causes effectively, missing opportunities to detect patterns of high-risk behaviors or product malfunctions that could inform prevention strategies. NFPA and USFA data underscore that effective fire investigations play a critical role in recognizing and mitigating preventable fire causes, such as electrical issues, heating malfunctions, and negligence. Adding

trained fire investigators to the CRR division would allow Chatham County to better analyze incidents, identify trends, and proactively prevent future fires, leading to improved fire safety and a reduction in repeat incidents.

3. **Absence of Targeted Fire and Life Safety Education Programs**

Chatham County lacks a formal, targeted fire and life safety education program to engage high-risk populations and increase public awareness of fire prevention practices. Without these outreach efforts, residents and business owners are less informed about essential safety measures, leading to increased risk. The inclusion of fire and life safety educators within the CRR division would allow CCFD to conduct school-based fire safety programs, engage vulnerable populations like the elderly, and host community workshops. Research by the NFPA suggests that proactive educational programs can reduce fire incidents by up to 30%, making community education a cost-effective approach to long-term fire risk reduction.

4. **Inability to Meet National Standards for Community Risk Reduction**

Currently, the absence of a CRR division means that Chatham County does not fully meet NFPA 1300 standards, which call for a holistic approach to community risk reduction, including inspections, code enforcement, fire investigations, and public education. Establishing a dedicated CRR division would bring Chatham County closer to national best practices and align with ISO PPC requirements, potentially improving the county's ISO rating. A better ISO rating could lead to a reduction in property insurance premiums, offering direct financial benefits to residents and business owners while reinforcing the value of a structured fire prevention and risk reduction program.

5. **Need for a Coordinated, Collaborative Framework**

Fire prevention and safety efforts in Chatham County lack coordination with other departments, such as Building Safety and Regulatory Services, Emergency Management, and Environmental Health. This fragmented approach limits the potential impact of fire safety efforts and leaves critical gaps in community risk reduction. By establishing the CRR division, CCFD will foster a collaborative framework that integrates fire safety with broader county safety initiatives, including emergency preparedness and public health efforts. A unified approach will ensure that all aspects of fire prevention, emergency planning, and environmental risk management are coordinated, creating a safer, more resilient community across Chatham County.

Community Risk Reduction Division Role Summaries

1. Fire Marshal

- Role: Oversee the CRR division, manage fire inspections and code enforcement, conduct fire investigations, and lead community risk reduction efforts. The Fire Marshal will ensure all inspection protocols are followed and maintain liaison with county and state agencies.

- Responsibilities:

  - Lead and manage all CRR division activities, including fire inspections, code enforcement, plan reviews, fire investigations, and public education programs to promote fire and life safety across the community.

  - Perform fire inspections to ensure compliance with fire codes and safety standards, addressing violations and enforcing corrective actions to mitigate fire risks in commercial, residential, and public properties.

  - Conduct thorough investigations of fire incidents to determine origin and cause, document findings, and work with law enforcement and related agencies when necessary to support legal proceedings and safety improvements.

- Qualifications: Certified in fire inspection, plans review, and fire investigation.

2. Deputy Fire Marshal

- Role: Assist the Fire Marshal in inspections, code enforcement, and fire investigations. The Deputy Fire Marshal will also take on specialized tasks such as risk assessments in high-hazard areas and helping businesses meet fire code compliance.

- Responsibilities:

  - Assist the Fire Marshal in division operations by ensuring the timely completion of inspections, investigations, and enforcement actions, supporting the overall mission of the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) division.

  - Perform routine and targeted fire inspections to ensure compliance with fire safety regulations, identifying and addressing code violations to minimize fire hazards in commercial, residential, and public properties.

  - Conduct thorough fire investigations to determine the origin and cause of incidents, documenting findings to support potential legal actions and prevent future occurrences through targeted risk reduction efforts.

- Qualifications: Certified in fire inspection, plans review, and fire investigation.

3. Deputy Fire Marshal

- Role: Focus on community engagement and education, working to prevent fire incidents through awareness programs and safety demonstrations. Lead initiatives that directly engage

the community, such as county-wide fire safety campaigns, home fire safety assessments, and public workshops on fire preparedness.

- Responsibilities:

  o Perform fire inspections across residential, commercial, and public properties to ensure adherence to fire safety codes and standards, identifying and addressing potential fire hazards to improve community safety.

  o Develop and deliver educational programs on fire prevention and life safety, including school visits, workshops, and informational sessions, to raise community awareness and promote safe practices.

  o Plan and execute comprehensive fire safety campaigns, collaborating with community partners and media outlets to disseminate key messages on fire prevention, emergency preparedness, and smoke alarm installation.

- Qualifications: Certified in fire inspection and fire and life safety education.

Justification for Establishment of the CRR Division

Enhanced Capacity for Fire Inspections and Code Enforcement

The addition of a CRR division within CCFD will allow for expanded inspection capacity and improved efficiency, ensuring that all buildings and businesses comply with fire codes in a timely manner. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1730, proper inspection and code enforcement are essential in preventing fire incidents and ensuring public safety.

By increasing fire inspection resources, Chatham County will be able to conduct 50% more inspections annually, reducing non-compliance incidents and mitigating potential fire hazards. Businesses will experience fewer delays in compliance reviews, and the county will significantly reduce the risk of fire-related incidents, which directly translates to reduced property loss and a safer community.

Improved Fire Investigation and Incident Analysis

The addition of certified fire investigators will give CCFD the ability to promptly and accurately determine the cause of fires, allowing for thorough fire investigations. This will be vital in identifying fire behavior patterns and improving fire prevention strategies. Quick and accurate fire cause determination helps law enforcement, insurance agencies, and state officials in understanding fire trends and ensuring accountability.

According to the NFPA and United States Fire Administration (USFA), thorough fire investigations are critical for identifying fire causes and contributing factors, including high-risk behaviors and product malfunctions. NFPA reports indicate that approximately 30% of structure fires are caused by preventable factors such as electrical malfunctions, heating equipment failure, and human negligence, which are often uncovered through post-fire investigations. According to the USFA, fire investigations

play a pivotal role in recognizing trends that lead to safety improvements in building design and construction materials. By adding certified fire investigators within the CRR division, Chatham County will enhance its ability to identify these trends, prevent repeat incidents, and develop more effective fire prevention strategies. This will directly contribute to the county's overall fire safety by ensuring that identified risks are mitigated promptly.

Dedicated Fire and Life Safety Education

A critical component of the CRR division will be the inclusion of a Fire Marshal focused on fire and life safety education. This position will allow CCFD to develop and implement targeted educational programs designed to engage the community in fire prevention efforts. According to research by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), educational outreach can reduce fire incidents by up to 30% in communities where proactive fire prevention education is widely implemented.

Targeted programs will include school fire safety campaigns, educational outreach to high-risk populations such as the elderly, and public safety demonstrations aimed at increasing awareness of fire prevention measures. This proactive approach is not only cost-effective but also vital to the long-term safety of Chatham County residents.

Alignment with National Standards

The creation of the CRR division aligns with NFPA 1300, which recommends a comprehensive approach to community risk reduction, encompassing inspections, code enforcement, fire investigations, and public education. By establishing this division, Chatham County will not only follow national best practices but also improve its Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating, potentially lowering insurance premiums for property owners.

Chatham County is projected to move up one tier in its ISO rating, leading to an estimated 5-10% reduction in residential and commercial property insurance premiums. This direct financial benefit will help the community recognize the value of the proposed division and foster support from both residents and business owners.

Collaborative Framework for Comprehensive Risk Reduction

The CRR division will work closely with other county departments, including Building Safety and Regulatory Services, Emergency Management, and Environmental Health. This collaborative framework ensures a holistic approach to fire and life safety by integrating fire risk reduction efforts into broader countywide safety initiatives.

A unified approach to fire prevention will not only streamline fire safety measures but also ensure that efforts such as emergency planning, environmental risk management, and community health are fully coordinated. The CRR division will be the key to achieving comprehensive fire and life safety throughout Chatham County.

Overview of Resource and Equipment Needs

To effectively implement the proposed Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division, adequate resources must be allocated to ensure the division operates efficiently and meets its objectives. The CRR team will require the following key elements:

1. Office Space and Technology:

   o Dedicated office space will be necessary for the Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshals to conduct administrative tasks, plan inspections, investigations, and manage community outreach programs.

   o Each office should be equipped with essential technology, including phones, laptops, printers, and high-speed internet access. These tools will enable seamless communication between the CRR division and other departments, businesses, and the public.

   o Furniture, such as desks, chairs, and filing cabinets, will be needed to create a functional workspace for staff.

2. Vehicles:

   o To ensure timely inspections, code enforcement, and on-scene investigations, the CRR division staff will require dedicated vehicles. These vehicles will be used to travel to different locations throughout Chatham County for fieldwork and community outreach. Reliable transportation is critical to meeting the division's goals efficiently.

3. Salaries and Benefits:

   o Competitive salaries and benefits will be essential to attract and retain qualified professionals in the Fire Marshal and Deputy Fire Marshal roles. These positions require individuals with specialized certifications in fire inspection, fire investigation, and life safety education. Adequate compensation is crucial to securing talent with the expertise necessary to carry out the division's responsibilities effectively.

Estimated Costs:

- Estimated cost for office setup (technology, furniture, etc.): $18,000

- Estimated cost for vehicles: $240,000

- Estimated cost of specialized equipment: $50,000

- Estimated salaries and benefits: $353,480

   Estimated total cost: $661,480

This allocation of resources will ensure the CRR Division is fully equipped to perform its duties and fulfill its mission of enhancing fire safety and community risk reduction in Chatham County.

Conclusion

The proposed Community Risk Reduction division will fill critical gaps in fire inspection, investigation, and public education services within Chatham County. By relocating the current fire inspector from Building Safety and Regulatory Services to the CCFD and establishing new positions, the department will be better equipped to address fire risks proactively and comprehensively.

By implementing this division in the first year of the strategic plan, Chatham County will demonstrate its commitment to public safety and lay the groundwork for long-term improvements in fire prevention, risk reduction, and community engagement. The investment in the CRR division will yield long-term benefits, including improved fire safety outcomes, enhanced compliance with fire codes, and a more informed and engaged community.

CHATHAM COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

1249 Eisenhower Drive, Savannah GA 31406

Office 912-219-0420 ● https://fire.chathamcountyga.gov/

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TO: Michael Kaigler, County Manager
FROM: James Vickers, Fire Chief 𝒥𝒱
REFERENCE: Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan – Fire Administration
DATE: 10/1/2024 (revised 2/28/2025)

Executive Summary

In accordance with the CCFD Strategic Plan 2024-2028, this plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to enhance administrative and support staff within the Chatham County Fire Department (CCFD). These essential positions will improve operational efficiency, optimize departmental functions, and ensure the department remains adaptable to the community's evolving needs. By prioritizing responsible resource management and financial stewardship, this initiative reinforces CCFD's commitment to community safety, rapid and effective emergency response, and long-term sustainability. Through strategic investments in personnel and accountability, CCFD upholds its mission to protect lives and property with efficiency, professionalism, and fiscal responsibility.

Identified Service Gaps and Needs – Fire Administrative and Support Services

CCFD faces several critical challenges that hinder its operational efficiency and effectiveness in serving the community. Addressing these challenges through strategic staffing enhancements is essential for improving the department's overall performance and readiness.

1. **Lack of Logistical Oversight**

   CCFD currently lacks centralized logistical management. This gap affects the department's operational readiness, response capabilities, and inventory accountability. The proposed addition of a Deputy Chief of Support Services and Inventory Control Coordinator will provide the necessary oversight to streamline logistical functions, ensuring that all operational needs are met promptly and efficiently.

2. **Insufficient Policy Management and Compliance**

   The absence of dedicated personnel to oversee policy compliance will lead to inconsistencies in policy application and challenges in meeting Insurance Service Office (ISO) Public Protection Class (PPC) and Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) and Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) standards. By appointing a Policy and PPC-Accreditation Administrator, CCFD will enhance its ability to maintain continuous policy compliance and ensure adherence to national best practices.

3. **Limited Public Communication and Community Engagement**

   CCFD's capacity for effective public outreach, media relations, and community education is significantly restricted. This limitation reduces the department's ability to communicate vital fire safety information and initiatives to the community, impacting public trust and engagement. The addition of a Public Affairs and Communications Manager will enhance the department's public communication efforts, foster stronger relationships with the community and promote transparency in its operations.

4. **Lack of Special Operations Oversight**

   CCFD currently lacks special operations oversight. This gap affects the department's operational readiness and response capabilities. The proposed addition of a Special Operations Division Chief will provide the necessary oversight to ensure special operation functions, ensuring that all operational needs are met promptly and efficiently.

These identified service gaps in logistics, policy management, and public communication, and special operations highlight the need for strategic staffing enhancements within CCFD. By adding a Deputy Chief of Support Services, Inventory Control Coordinator, Policy and Accreditation Administrator, Public Information Officer, and Special Operations Division Chief, CCFD can effectively address these challenges, strengthen its operational readiness, and enhance its commitment to service excellence and community safety.

Administrative Role Summaries

1. Deputy Chief of Support Services

   • Role: Oversee logistical operations vital for achieving ISO PPC requirements, including the management of volunteers, fleet, uniforms, personal protective ensemble (PPE), facilities, equipment, and supplies.

   • Responsibilities:

     o Ensure timely maintenance, replacement, and inspection of apparatus and equipment to support readiness, reliability, and ISO PPC criteria.

     o Manage uniform and PPE inventory, handling procurement, inspection, and maintenance to comply with national safety standards.

     o Oversee facility maintenance and upgrades to maintain a safe, compliant, and fully operational environment.

     o Streamline inventory and supply management to ensure efficient use of resources and timely response to operational needs.

     o Monitor and manage logistics budgets, ensuring cost-effective purchasing aligned with quality standards.

2. Inventory Control Coordinator

   • Role: Coordinate and manage the CCFD equipment and supply functions.

   • Responsibilities:

     o Manage and maintain the inventory of all department equipment and supplies, ensuring accurate records of items issued, returned, or in storage.

- o Oversee the purchasing process, including obtaining quotes, evaluating products, and preparing specifications for large expenditures.

- o Coordinate with vendors to ensure timely delivery of equipment and supplies and evaluate products for potential acquisition.

- o Ensure proper storage and security of inventory, including hazardous materials, specialized gear, and high-value equipment.

- o Manage the distribution of uniforms, duty gear, and supplies to personnel, particularly during onboarding.

- o Monitor and process repair or replacement of damaged or outdated equipment.

3. Policy and Accreditation Administrator

- • Role: Ensure ongoing CPSE/CFAI accreditation readiness, ISO PPC compliance, and policy alignment with CCFD's and the county's service standards and strategic goals.

- • Responsibilities:

  - o Administer documentation related to CPSE/CFAI accreditation and ISO PPC compliance, overseeing data collection, reporting, and adherence to best practices.

  - o Manage CCFD's internal audit process for policies and procedures, maintaining continuous quality improvement to meet evolving standards.

  - o Develop training and resources to ensure all personnel understand and follow CCFD policies, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

4. Public Affairs and Communications Manager (PACM)

- • Role: Serve as the department's primary liaison to the community, enhancing transparency and public education on fire safety, department initiatives, and emergency preparedness.

- • Responsibilities:

  - o Develop and implement a comprehensive public communication strategy, managing media relations, social media outreach, and public inquiries.

  - o Collaborate with the Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team to deliver timely information on fire safety, emergency preparedness, and CCFD's initiatives, enhancing community awareness.

  - o Collect and assess public feedback to adjust communication approaches, strengthening CCFD's public engagement and alignment with the community's needs.

5. Special Operations Division Chief

- Role: Oversees all aspects of technical rescue, hazardous materials, shipboard and industrial firefighting, wildland firefighting, and marine operations resources and functions to ensure operational readiness, compliance, and efficiency.

- Responsibilities:

  o Develop, implement, and manage the department's special operations programs, policies, protocols, and procedures, ensuring alignment with local, state, and national standards.

  o Plan and oversee specialized training for personnel in areas such as technical rescue, hazardous materials response, shipboard and industrial firefighting, wildland firefighting, and marine operations.

  o Ensure specialized equipment, apparatus, and facilities are maintained in a constant state of operational readiness.

  o Serve as Incident Commander or Technical Specialist during significant emergency disaster operations, ensuring strategic coordination and safety compliance.

Enhancing Fire Department Administrative and Support Services

Deputy Chief of Support Services

Objective: Establish a comprehensive, data-driven Support Services program within CCFD to meet community demands, enhance ISO PPC, and achieve CPSE/CFAI accreditation. This plan is focused on fiscal responsibility, operational readiness, and the gradual, sustainable improvement of apparatus, PPE, facilities, and inventory management.

Key Actions

The Deputy Chief of Support Services will initiate a structured, data-informed approach to improve the readiness, reliability, and efficiency of CCFD's logistical operations. This role will be central in driving a cohesive system for apparatus and equipment management, uniform and PPE compliance, facility upkeep, and resource distribution to sustain CCFD's high standards of service.

1. Apparatus and Equipment Maintenance

   The Deputy Chief will implement a rigorous maintenance and inspection schedule for all apparatus and equipment, leveraging usage data and condition assessments to prioritize needs. Initial protocols will address critical apparatus, ensuring all vehicles and equipment meet the necessary ISO PPC standards for readiness and reliability. Replacement of major apparatus will occur gradually over a 3-7 year period and then on an as-needed basis to ensure ongoing alignment with national standards and optimal service capacity.

2. Uniform and PPE Lifecycle Management

   Establishing a comprehensive process for managing uniform and PPE procurement, inspection, and maintenance will be a top priority. The Deputy Chief will develop a tracking system to ensure that PPE and uniforms meet safety standards and are rotated on an established schedule, reducing exposure risks and promoting firefighter safety. Inventory tracking will ensure timely replacement cycles and a sustainable supply of compliant equipment, keeping CCFD personnel equipped and protected.

3. Facility Maintenance and Upgrades

   The Deputy Chief will conduct assessments of CCFD facilities, identifying immediate needs for safety and operational compliance. A strategic plan will be developed for facility maintenance, targeting high-priority upgrades in the initial phase and establishing a long-term schedule for renovations. These upgrades, completed in stages over 3-10 years, will ensure that all facilities are safe, compliant, and supportive of CCFD's operational requirements.

4. Inventory and Supply Management System

   Implementing a streamlined inventory management system will enhance efficiency and resource accessibility across CCFD. The Deputy Chief will design a centralized system to track, allocate, and replenish supplies as needed, using data insights to optimize stock levels and streamline resource distribution. Standardized intake and auditing processes will ensure that resources are readily available for operations without overspending or shortages.

5. Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Oversight

   Guided by a commitment to fiscal responsibility, the Deputy Chief will establish and monitor a logistics budget, prioritizing cost-effective purchasing and quality control. By leveraging bulk purchasing agreements and data-driven budget reviews, the Deputy Chief will focus on efficient spending, targeting cost reductions while maintaining high standards. This approach will support ongoing financial sustainability for apparatus, PPE, and facility management needs over the long term.

Outcome: This Support Services plan will position CCFD to meet current and future community needs through an optimized logistical framework. With a focus on data-driven decisions, fiscal responsibility, and gradual, sustainable improvements, this approach will help enhance the ISO PPC and meet CPSE/CFAI accreditation standards, securing CCFD's reputation as a reliable and community-focused fire department.

Inventory Control Coordinator

Objective: To coordinate and manage the Chatham County Fire Department's (CCFD) equipment and supply functions, ensuring operational readiness, efficient resource management, and alignment with the department's goals of enhancing ISO PPC ratings and CPSE/CFAI accreditation.

Key Actions:

The Inventory Control Coordinator will implement a structured, data-informed approach to enhance the efficiency and reliability of CCFD's inventory and supply operations. This role will be central to establishing a cohesive system for managing equipment and supply acquisition, distribution, and maintenance, ensuring operational readiness and adherence to safety protocols. The position will also support fiscal responsibility and contribute to the department's strategic objectives by optimizing resource management and streamlining logistical processes.

1. Inventory Management

   o Maintain accurate records of all department equipment and supplies, tracking items issued, returned, or in storage.

   o Regularly update inventory systems to reflect stock levels and anticipate future needs.

2. Procurement and Vendor Coordination

   o Oversee purchasing processes, including obtaining quotes, evaluating products, and preparing specifications for large expenditures.

   o Collaborate with vendors to ensure timely delivery and evaluate potential acquisitions for quality and cost-effectiveness.

3. Equipment and Supply Distribution

   o Manage the issuance of uniforms, duty gear, and supplies, particularly for new personnel.

   o Ensure proper storage, security, and maintenance of hazardous materials, high-value items, and specialized equipment.

4. Operational Support

   o Coordinate with the training department to provide necessary equipment for drills and operational readiness.

   o Facilitate the repair or replacement of damaged or outdated equipment to minimize downtime.

5. Safety and Compliance

   o Ensure adherence to safety protocols for storing and handling sensitive or hazardous materials.

   o Maintain compliance with regulatory standards for inventory management and equipment use.

6. Data-Driven Decision Making

   o Analyze inventory data to optimize stock levels and prevent shortages or overstocking.

- o Support financial planning by tracking expenditure and contributing to budget development.

7. Professional Development

   - o Attend meetings, training sessions, and conferences to stay updated on best practices in inventory control and fire service logistics.

This structured approach will enhance CCFD's logistical capabilities, promote operational efficiency, and support the department's strategic goals of service excellence and community safety.

Policy and PPC-Accreditation Administrator

Objective: Establish a robust policy and accreditation framework led by the Policy and PPC-Accreditation Administrator to achieve CPSE/CFAI accreditation, enhance ISO PPC compliance, and ensure that all CCFD policies are current, comprehensive, and widely understood. This plan is focused on fostering a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and alignment with industry standards.

Key Actions

The Policy and Accreditation Administrator will lead efforts to systematize CCFD's approach to accreditation, policy compliance, and internal quality improvement. This role will drive continuous alignment with CPSE/CFAI and ISO PPC requirements through strategic documentation, rigorous auditing, and effective personnel training.

1. CPSE Accreditation and ISO PPC Documentation Management

   The Policy and Accreditation Administrator will oversee all documentation related to CPSE/CFAI accreditation and ISO PPC compliance, setting up processes for data collection, reporting, and adherence to national best practices. This administrator will maintain an organized repository of records to ensure that all necessary data, performance metrics, and compliance reports are readily available and aligned with accreditation requirements. The documentation process will be regularly evaluated to ensure ongoing improvement and efficient access to compliance-related information.

2. Internal Audit Process and Policy Quality Control

   To support continuous quality improvement, the Policy and Accreditation Administrator will establish a structured internal audit process for reviewing CCFD policies and procedures. These audits will assess policy relevance, adherence to standards, and alignment with operational goals, identifying any gaps or areas for improvement. By conducting regular audits and updating policies to reflect evolving standards, this role will ensure that CCFD maintains compliance and readiness for accreditation assessments.

3. Personnel Training and Policy Awareness

   A core responsibility of the Policy and Accreditation Administrator will be to develop training resources that make CCFD policies accessible and comprehensible to all personnel. Through structured training programs, guides, and regular policy briefings, this role will foster a culture of

accountability and continuous improvement, ensuring that staff are fully informed and aligned with organizational standards. This training initiative will emphasize the importance of adhering to policies and understanding CCFD's commitment to service excellence and operational safety.

4. Ongoing Best Practices and Continuous Improvement

   This role will ensure that CCFD's approach to policies and accreditation aligns with industry's best practices by staying up to date with changes in national and accreditation standards. Through routine reviews and adjustments, the Policy and Accreditation Administrator will drive CCFD's commitment to continuous improvement, enabling the department to adapt to new regulations, advancements, and operational needs.

5. Budgeting and Resource Allocation for Compliance

   The Policy and Accreditation Administrator will work with department leadership to allocate necessary resources for policy management, audit processes, and training programs. By ensuring that compliance initiatives are adequately funded, the administrator will maintain financial oversight while supporting critical activities that contribute to CCFD's operational and accreditation goals.

Outcome: This Policy and Accreditation plan will equip CCFD with a sustainable, proactive framework for policy compliance, quality improvement, and accreditation readiness. Through organized documentation, rigorous internal audits, and effective training programs, the Policy and Accreditation Administrator will establish CCFD as a transparent, standards-driven department fully prepared to achieve and maintain CPSE/CFAI accreditation and improved ISO PPC ratings, reflecting a strong commitment to community safety and service excellence.

Public Affairs and Communications Manager

Objective: Establish a comprehensive public communication framework led by the Public Affairs and Communications Manager (PACM) to enhance community awareness, engage the public in fire safety and emergency preparedness, and foster transparent communication about CCFD's services and initiatives. This plan emphasizes building strong community relations and promoting a proactive public safety culture in alignment with CCFD's mission.

Key Actions

The PIO will lead CCFD's efforts to develop a cohesive communication strategy that builds public trust, provides essential safety information, and supports CCFD's Community Risk Reduction (CRR) objectives. Through media relations, digital outreach, and responsive public engagement, the PACM will enhance CCFD's connection with the community.

1. Comprehensive Public Communication Strategy

   The PACM will create and implement a unified communication strategy to ensure consistent, accurate, and timely information is delivered to the public across all platforms. This strategy will encompass media relations, social media outreach, and handling public inquiries to foster an

informed and engaged community. The PACM will actively manage social media and media channels to communicate CCFD news, community events, and safety messages, establishing CCFD as a reliable information source.

2. Collaboration with Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Team

A priority for the PACM will be to collaborate closely with the CRR team to provide timely, targeted information on fire safety, emergency preparedness, and public safety initiatives. This collaboration will include developing educational content, promoting fire prevention programs, and sharing seasonal safety tips to reinforce the community's safety awareness. By aligning CRR and communication efforts, the PACM will help reduce community risk and support CCFD's strategic goals.

3. Public Feedback Collection and Assessment

To ensure CCFD's communication approach aligns with community needs, the PACM will establish mechanisms for collecting and assessing public feedback. This feedback will be gathered from public surveys, social media comments, and direct community interactions. By analyzing feedback data, the PACM will adjust messaging and outreach methods to improve CCFD's public engagement, ensuring communication is both responsive and reflective of community priorities.

4. Emergency Communication and Rapid Response

The PACM will develop protocols for emergency communication, ensuring rapid, clear, and accurate messaging during fire incidents, natural disasters, or other community emergencies. These protocols will include pre-prepared templates and clear workflows for media updates, social media posts, and direct community notifications to enhance public safety and reduce misinformation during critical events.

5. Ongoing Evaluation and Strategic Adjustments

The PACM will continuously evaluate the effectiveness of communication strategies and adjust as needed to maintain high engagement and community alignment. By staying informed on best practices in public safety communication and analyzing outreach performance, the PACM will ensure that CCFD's public messaging remains dynamic, impactful, and responsive to evolving community needs.

Outcome: This PACM plan will establish CCFD as a trusted and proactive source of public information, supporting the department's mission to enhance community safety and preparedness. Through a comprehensive communication strategy, active CRR collaboration, and responsive public engagement, the PACM will strengthen community relations, increase fire safety awareness, and promote transparency in all CCFD initiatives.

Special Operations Division Chief

Objectives: To lead and oversee all aspects of CCFD's Special Operations Division, ensuring operational readiness, compliance with local, state, and national standards, and fostering a culture of safety and operational excellence. This includes managing technical rescue, hazardous materials, wildland firefighting, marine operations, and other specialized response capabilities to support the department's mission, vision, and goals.

Key Actions:

The Special Operations Division Chief will implement a comprehensive, structured approach to enhance CCFD's specialized response capabilities, ensuring high standards of safety, training, and operational readiness. This role will play a vital part in maintaining interagency collaboration, optimizing resource management, and supporting community risk reduction initiatives.

1. Specialized Training and Program Development

   o Develop and oversee training programs for technical rescue, hazardous materials, wildland firefighting, marine operations, and related special operations functions.

   o Align programs with NFPA, OSHA, and industry best practices to ensure personnel are prepared for complex emergencies.

2. Operational Readiness and Resource Management

   o Ensure all specialized equipment, apparatus, and facilities are maintained for immediate deployment.

   o Oversee the allocation of resources and budget management for special operations needs.

3. Emergency Response Leadership

   o Serve as Incident Commander or Technical Specialist during significant incidents, providing strategic oversight and ensuring safety compliance.

   o Coordinate interagency collaboration to enhance resource-sharing and operational effectiveness during multi-jurisdictional responses.

4. Policy and Compliance Oversight

   o Develop and update policies, SOPs, and protocols to meet evolving operational requirements and compliance standards.

   o Monitor adherence to NFPA standards, OSHA regulations, and departmental policies.

5. Performance Metrics and Reporting

   o Track operational performance, preparing detailed reports to inform departmental leadership and support continuous improvement.

6. Team Development and Supervision

   o Supervise and mentor personnel, fostering professional growth and ensuring alignment with departmental goals.

   o Conduct evaluations and implement corrective actions to maintain a high-performing team.

This structured approach ensures the Special Operations Division is equipped to address the diverse challenges of emergency response, supports CCFD's strategic objectives, and enhances the department's reputation for operational excellence.

Alignment with Chatham County's Mission, Vision, and Goals

The Administration and Support Services proposal aligns with Chatham County Government's mission and vision by addressing key logistical and operational support needs essential for fire protection, public safety, and community engagement. This proposal supports the County's commitment to enhancing residents' quality of life through effective resource management, policy compliance, and transparent communication. By developing a robust support system for CCFD, this plan contributes to making Chatham County an exceptional place to live, work, and play, with an emphasis on responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and a dedication to service excellence.

The primary objective of this proposal is to establish the resources necessary to ensure we can improve the county's ISO PPC and achieve accreditation through the CPSE/CFAI within the planned timeline, ensuring continuous improvement and alignment with national standards.

Overview of Resource Needs – Administrative and Support Services Proposal

To implement the Administrative and Support Services proposal effectively, adequate resources must be allocated to ensure CCFD operates efficiently and meets its goals. Key resource elements include:

1. Office Space and Technology

   • Dedicated office space is essential for administrative and support staff to perform their duties efficiently. Offices will be equipped with the necessary technology—such as computers, phones, printers, and reliable internet access—alongside ergonomic furniture (desks, chairs, filing systems) to create productive workspaces. These resources will enable staff to manage logistics, policy compliance, and communications seamlessly. Additionally, stations will require bunkrooms with beds, lockers, and other essentials to support personnel comfortably and securely.

2. Vehicles for Operational Support

   • Reliable transportation is essential for effective administrative oversight and operational support. Assigning dedicated vehicles to key personnel will enhance mobility across Chatham County, enabling swift response, proactive supervision, and efficient risk mitigation during emergencies. Well-equipped and dependable vehicles are critical to

maintaining operational efficiency, ensuring seamless command functions, and supporting the department's safety objectives.

3. Competitive Salaries and Benefits

- Offering competitive salaries and benefits is essential to attract and retain skilled administrative and support personnel. Fair compensation ensures a motivated workforce, supports recruitment efforts, and fosters team cohesion, directly contributing to operational effectiveness. By investing in our personnel, CCFD secures the department's long-term quality, stability, and resilience, ensuring it can continue to serve and protect the community effectively.

These resource allocations are vital for building a responsive, well-equipped support system within CCFD that aligns with Chatham County's goals for public safety and service excellence.

Estimated Costs

- Estimated cost for office setup (technology, furniture, etc.): $40,000
- Estimated cost for vehicles: $400,000
- Estimated cost of specialized equipment: $60,000
- Estimated salaries and benefits for staffing: $597,500
  Estimated total cost: $1,097,500

Conclusion

This Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan enhances CCFD's capacity to provide efficient and effective fire protection services by implementing targeted resource allocation, strategic staffing, and a robust communication framework. By strengthening operational and logistical support, policy compliance, and community engagement, this proposal will improve the ISO PPC and support CPSE/CFAI accreditation, aligning CCFD with national standards, industry research, and best practices. This plan equips CCFD to meet Chatham County's evolving needs by building a safer, more responsive, and community-focused fire service that protects lives and property while fostering a modernized, accountable, and resilient operational environment.

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TO: Michael Kaigler, County Manager
FROM: James Vickers, Fire Chief 𝒥𝒱
REFERENCE: Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan – Fire Operations
DATE: 10/1/2024 (revised 2/28/2025)

Executive Summary

This proposal outlines a fiscally responsible, comprehensive three-year phased Staffing and Resource Allocation Plan designed to provide the Chatham County Fire Department (CCFD) with the essential resources needed to effectively manage incidents safely and deliver quality services to the community. Aligned with Priority Goals 4 and 9 of the *CCFD Strategic Plan 2024-2028*, the plan addresses gaps identified in the *2023 ISO Public Protection Classification (PPC) Summary*, drive time analysis data, and community risk assessments, systematically advancing the department's alignment with national standards.

This phased approach prioritizes targeted improvements across key areas of the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS), including personnel, training, stations and apparatus, equipment, response time, deployment, and water supply. Each phase is strategically timed, budget-conscious, and includes oversight measures to ensure fiscal accountability throughout implementation.

By aligning with national standards, industry research, and best practices, this plan will enhance service delivery while advancing ISO FSRS compliance. Advancing ISO FSRS compliance through responsible resource allocation will strengthen community safety and resilience while maintaining a strong focus on financial accountability.

Identified Service Gaps and Needs – Fire Operations

1. **Insufficient Personnel to Meet Minimum National Standards**

   CCFD operates below the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1710 Effective Response Force (ERF) minimum standards, deploying only 10 firefighters for structure fires—far fewer than the 17 required by national standards, industry research, and best practices for safe and effective operations. Additionally, the absence of a fire officer on every apparatus compromises supervisory oversight and national span-of-control guidelines, increasing operational risk. Research from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has demonstrated that inadequate staffing leads to slower response times, increased firefighter fatigue, and higher risks during fire suppression. The NIST residential fireground experiments found that four-person crews complete critical tasks 25% faster than two-person crews, while reduced staffing significantly delays search-and-rescue operations and fire suppression. To improve firefighter safety, operational effectiveness, and compliance with NFPA 1710, CCFD must increase both firefighter staffing and supervisory positions. Proper staffing ensures effective incident management, enhances response capabilities, and ultimately strengthens community safety.

2. **Geographic and Response Time Limitations**

Several stations used by CCFD are not optimally located, with some positioned within or near the City of Savannah limits, leading to delayed response times in areas of unincorporated Chatham County. Fires can reach flashover in under five minutes, and survival rates for cardiac arrest decrease by 7-10% for every minute without intervention. Currently, CCFD meets the four-minute first-unit travel time target only 60.79% of the time, highlighting the need for improved coverage. To enhance response capabilities, emergency efficiency, and overall public safety, strategic station relocation and expansion are necessary. Properly positioned fire stations will reduce response times, improve service equity across the county, and align CCFD operations with national standards and best practices.

3. **Shortage of Aerial Apparatus**

CCFD lacks a sufficient number of staffed aerial apparatus to meet ISO standards and provide adequate coverage across unincorporated Chatham County. The limited availability of ladder trucks reduces the department's ability to effectively respond to structure fires, technical rescues, and other incidents requiring elevated access. However, strategically relocating fire stations can optimize aerial unit placement, improve coverage, reduce response times, enhancing overall service delivery and reducing the number of aerial apparatus required.

4. **Lack of Hydrants**

Many areas in unincorporated Chatham County lack sufficient hydrant coverage, which, combined with limited fire personnel and available water tenders, restricts the water supply for fire suppression. Increasing staffing and purchasing additional water tenders would significantly improve CCFD's capacity to address these water supply gaps and reduce fire loss.

Addressing these critical service gaps is essential to enhancing CCFD's operational effectiveness, firefighter safety, and overall community protection. The proposed four-year strategic plan provides a phased approach to increasing personnel, improving supervisory oversight, adjusting station locations, expanding aerial apparatus coverage, and strengthening water supply resources. By implementing these improvements, CCFD will move closer to meeting national standards, improving its ISO PPC, and ensuring faster, more effective emergency response across unincorporated Chatham County. These investments will not only enhance firefighter capabilities but also provide the residents of Chatham County with a higher level of fire services.

Enhancing Fire Department Operations

1. Personnel Reallocation and Staffing Enhancements

This three-year phased staffing strategy is designed to strengthen fire suppression operations, medical and mental health intervention services, and special operations for CCFD. The primary goal is to enhance the ERF by reallocating personnel from closed stations and adding fire officers and

firefighters to critical units. These staffing enhancements will ensure compliance with national standards, increase supervisory oversight, and improve overall response capabilities.

The phased approach is budget-conscious, balancing fiscal responsibility with operational efficiency. By spreading personnel costs over three years, it allows for sustainable budget management while minimizing operational disruptions. Gradual staffing increases will enhance fireground operations, optimize span-of-control ratios, and improve response times. Ongoing performance assessments will provide data-driven insights, enabling adjustments to maximize effectiveness and ensure compliance with national standards.

2. Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

An essential component of this plan is finalizing mutual and automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments to strengthen collaborative emergency response efforts. While we are still awaiting responses from some departments, many have already signed the mutual aid agreements, and Garden City has also signed an automatic aid agreement. These agreements will allow those departments to pool resources, address service gaps, enhance compliance with national standards, and can lead to a reduction in costs across all participating fire departments in Chatham County.

3. Station Relocation and Construction

This plan includes the strategic temporary closure and relocation of two poorly positioned fire stations, reallocating apparatus and personnel to enhance coverage and service delivery across unincorporated Chatham County. Additionally, it calls for the renovation of existing stations, the construction of new fire stations, and the development of a dedicated fire headquarters to support long-term operational efficiency and growth.

This strategy supports fiscal accountability by immediately reducing unnecessary costs linked to poorly located stations, leading to a more efficient and cost-effective service model. Ultimately, these changes will enhance community protection and resource management, allowing CCFD to better meet the needs of the community it serves.

Alignment with Chatham County' Mission, Vision, and Goals

By addressing fire protection and emergency response deficiencies, the plan directly supports Chatham County Government's mission and vision to protect the public and enhance the overall quality of life for residents. It advances the goal of making Chatham County the best place to live, work, and play, while ensuring responsible use of taxpayer resources and upholding a commitment of service excellence.

A key goal of this plan is to improve the county's ISO PPC and achieve accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) in year four.

Implementation Timeline

Year One: Begin the phased addition of personnel, finalize mutual and automatic aid agreements, close ineffective stations and reallocate personnel. Begin purchase and renovation of identified stations, and construction of new fire stations and headquarters.

Personnel Reallocation and Staffing Enhancements

- Current staffing levels fall short of meeting NFPA 1710 ERF requirements, limiting CCFD's ability to respond to emergencies as effectively. To improve resource management and enhance response capabilities, it is recommended that two Battalion Chiefs, one Safety Officer, two Captains, and one Lieutenant be added per shift in year one. Increasing operational staffing will bring CCFD more in line with national standards, industry research, and best practices, ensuring the department is better equipped to effectively serve the community.

Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

- Finalizing mutual and automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments to improve collaborative responses to emergencies. This initiative aims to elevate community safety and service efficiency through a unified county-wide response approach.

Station Closures and Renovations

- Station 1 (10703 White Buff Road) - CCFD recommends closing the current Station 1 due to its ineffective location within Savannah city limits, which restricts its operational effectiveness and primarily serves the Town of Vernonburg (population: 139). As a result, it is recommended that the Town of Vernonburg contracts with the Savannah Fire Department for fire protection services. This transition will allow CCFD to reallocate personnel and apparatus to underserved areas of unincorporated Chatham County, improving response coverage where it is most needed.

  Additionally, due to the age of the facility and its outdated infrastructure, ongoing maintenance is cost-prohibitive, and substantial renovations would be required to operate it as a modern fire station. The significant financial investment needed to bring the facility up to current operational and safety standards, coupled with the fact that it is being rented from Southside Community Fire Protection Inc., dba Chatham Emergency Services (CES), further supports the necessity of its closure as a fire station and the relocation of resources to a more strategic location.

- Station 14 (2606 East President Street) - CCFD recommends closing Station 14 due to its ineffective location within Savannah city limits, where it represents a misallocation of resources. Its limited service area, including Emerald Point and Causton Bluff, can now be adequately served by Station 8 following the new bridge completion, making continued

operation unnecessary. Closing Station 14 will allow for the reallocation of personnel and apparatus to enhance staffing, optimize resource deployment, and reduce operational costs. Additionally, maintaining the facility is financially impractical, as it remains under CES ownership.

To enhance emergency response in underserved areas on the east side of Wilmington Island, CCFD proposes relocating Station 14 to Johnny Mercer Boulevard near Quarterman, with the final site determined through drive-time analysis. This modern facility will house an engine, water tender, and ladder truck, improving response times and operational efficiency. Relocating the station to this strategic location will also eliminate the need for two aerial apparatus in the East Battalion, ensuring optimal ladder truck placement while maintaining compliance with ISO standards. This approach reduces unnecessary costs and improves resource utilization immediately, and after construction of a new facility enhances coverage, and strengthens the department's ability to respond effectively.

• Station 13 (105 Quacco Road) - CCFD recommends replacing the current Station 13 due to significant operational challenges associated with the leased facility. The existing site suffers from limited space, inadequate facilities, and recurring structural and mechanical issues, making it unsuitable for long-term use. Essential amenities such as reliable access to drinking water, showers, and cooking facilities are lacking, and the station cannot accommodate additional firefighters, further restricting its effectiveness.

To address these deficiencies, CCFD proposes constructing a new Station 13 between Quacco Road and Berwick Boulevard on Highway 17, with the final site determined through drive-time analysis. This modern facility will house key resources, including an engine, water tender, truck, and Battalion Chief, ensuring improved response times and enhanced service delivery in the surrounding areas. Prioritizing this construction will enable the department to effectively meet current and future service demands while better supporting its mission to protect the community.

• Fire Headquarters (1249 Eisenhower Drive) - The existing headquarters lack the necessary space and modern infrastructure to support fire administration and operations effectively. To address these challenges, CCFD proposes constructing a new, combined Station 1 and headquarters on Ferguson Avenue near Sandfly, with the final site determined through drive-time analysis. This new facility will centralize critical resources, including an engine, water tender, ladder truck, district chief, behavioral health unit, fire prevention division, administration and support services. By streamlining operations and enhancing service delivery, this modern, purpose-built facility will improve long-term efficiency and resource allocation while eliminating the costs associated with maintaining an aging, impractical facility owned by Chatham Emergency Services.

- Renovation of Fire Stations - Several CCFD fire stations are outdated and no longer adequate to support modern fire operations or the community's growing needs. To enhance safety, efficiency, and firefighter well-being, it is recommended that these stations be renovated or replaced as needed. Improvements should include upgraded infrastructure, enhanced amenities, and modern technology to better support personnel and streamline service delivery. Additionally, maintaining these stations is financially impractical, as they remain under the ownership of CES. To ensure long-term stability and operational control, the county must prioritize the purchase of existing CES stations or identify suitable locations for relocation in the near-mid future.

Year Two: Continue the phased addition of personnel, with a focus on increasing compliance with national standards, industry research, and best practices.

Staffing Enhancements

- In the second year of the strategic plan, CCFD recommends building on year one by adding additional fire personnel in the second year of the strategic plan to strengthen response capabilities, enhance firefighter safety, and reduce risks to both firefighters and the public during emergency operations. The final number and type of positions will be determined through review of the staffing analysis which is based on NFPA 1710, community risk assessments, and research from NIST, which has demonstrated that increased firefighter staffing significantly improves operational efficiency, reduces fire growth, and enhances victim survivability. Expanding the firefighter workforce will allow CCFD to better meet the growing needs of the community, improve service equity across the county, and ensure alignment with national standards, industry research, and best practices.

Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

- Maintain mutual and automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments to improve collaborative responses to emergencies. This initiative elevates community safety and service efficiency through a unified county-wide response approach.

Station Closure and Maintenance

- Building on the progress made in year one, it is essential to maintain and further enhance CCFD fire stations in year two to ensure they meet modern operational standards. This phase will focus on addressing any remaining facility deficiencies, expanding upon previous improvements, and upgrading infrastructure to prioritize safety, comfort, and operational efficiency. Ongoing investment in these enhancements will support CCFD's ability to deliver high-quality service, meet the growing demands of the community, and provide firefighters with the necessary resources to perform their duties safely and effectively.

Year Three: Continue personnel additions, agency collaboration, and station and resource optimization with a focus on moving closer to meeting the full alarm staffing requirements established by NFPA 1710.

- In the third year of the strategic plan, CCFD recommends further expanding firefighter staffing to enhance response capabilities, improve operational efficiency, and ensure compliance with national standards. The final number and type of positions will be determined through a staffing analysis based on community risk assessment, national standards, industry research, and best practices.

Mutual and Automatic Aid Agreements

- In year three, it will be crucial to sustain mutual and automatic aid agreements with neighboring fire departments to maintain service efficiency through a unified county-wide response approach.

Station Maintenance

- Building on the progress made in years one and two, it is essential to continue to focus on sustaining and expanding the improvements made in prior years, addressing any remaining facility deficiencies, and enhancing infrastructure to further promote safety, comfort, and operational efficiency.

Overview of Resource Needs

To effectively implement the proposal and ensure the department operates efficiently while meeting its objectives, adequate resources must be allocated. Fire operations will require the following key elements:

1. Office Space, Technology, Bunkrooms:

   - Dedicated office space is essential for fire officers to effectively perform administrative and operational duties. Each office should be equipped with the necessary technology, such as phones, computers, printers, and reliable internet access, along with functional furniture like desks, chairs, and filing cabinets to create a productive workspace for staff. Additionally, bunkrooms with beds, lockers, and other essentials will be required at each station to accommodate additional personnel.

   - Dedicated office space is crucial for fire officers to effectively perform administrative and operational duties. Each office should be equipped with the necessary technology, including phones, computers, printers, and reliable internet access, as well as functional furniture such as desks, chairs, and filing cabinets. This setup will create a productive workspace for staff. Additionally, bunkrooms with beds, lockers, and other essentials will be needed at each station to accommodate personnel during shifts.

2. Vehicles:

   - Dedicated vehicles for the Safety Officer and Battalion Chiefs are essential to ensure effective incident management and safety oversight during emergency responses. These

vehicles will allow them to quickly respond to incidents across Chatham County, providing timely supervision, risk mitigation, and crucial support for fire crews. Reliable transportation is vital for maintaining operational efficiency, enhancing safety, and fulfilling command objectives, ensuring all personnel have the necessary tools to operate safely and effectively.

3. Salaries and Benefits:

   • Competitive salaries and benefits are key to attracting and retaining skilled firefighters and officers. Offering fair compensation supports recruitment efforts, boosts morale, reduces turnover, and strengthens team cohesion, which are critical factors in maintaining operational effectiveness. By investing in our personnel, we not only retain a dependable, motivated workforce, but also ensure the long-term quality, stability, and resilience of the department. This investment in our staff will help ensure we meet the growing demands of modern fire services and continue to protect the community effectively.

Estimated Costs:

   • Construction and renewal cost will be determined based on detailed planning, and consultation with Facilities Department and construction experts: TBD

   • Estimated cost for office and living area setup (technology, furniture, etc.): $30,000

   • Estimated cost for vehicles: $300,000

   • Estimated cost of specialized equipment: $60,000

   • Estimated salaries and benefits (Year 1 - as proposed): $ 2,093,350

   Estimated total cost: $2,483,350

Conclusion

Through enhanced resource allocation, increased staffing, collaboration with neighboring departments, and the strategic relocation and remodeling of stations, CCFD will establish a safer and more effective operational environment. These initiatives will strengthen NFPA 1710 compliance and improve the ISO PPC, bringing the community better emergency services and potentially lowering insurance costs. This four-year plan not only supports but also enhances the overall mission and vision of Chatham County Government, ensuring that our community remains a great place to live, work, and play.

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STAFFING PER SHIFT

CURRENT	UNIT TYPE	INSERVICE	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
MINIMUM	Engine	11	2	22
STAFFING	Squad	3	2	6
	Truck	4	3	12
	Safety Officer	1	1	1
	District Chief	1	1	1
	Floater	2	1	2
			FTE	44

EFFECTIVE RESPONSE FORCE LEVEL

1st ALARM ASSIGNMENT			
UNIT TYPE	ASSIGNED	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
Engine	2	2	4
Squad	1	2	2
Truck	1	2	2
Safety Officer	1	1	1
District Chief	1	1	1
		ERF (NO)	10

FTE (PER SHIFT/3 SHIFTS)

POSITION	STAFF LEVEL	ALL SHIFTS
Advanced Firefighters	19	57
Apparatus Operator	19	57
Lieutenants (Truck)	2	6
Captains (Truck)	2	6
Safety Officer	1	3
District Chief	1	3
	44	132

STATION 1 AND STATION 14 TEMPORARILY SHUT DOWN; AND ADDED STAFFING

PHASE 1	UNIT TYPE	INSERVICE	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
IMPROVED	Engine	9	2	18
LEVEL OF	Squad	3	3	9
SERVICE	Truck	4	3	12
YEAR 1 (FY26)	Safety Officer	2	1	2
	Battalion Chief	2	1	2
	District Chief	1	1	1
	Floater	6	1	6
			FTE	50

1st ALARM ASSIGNMENT			
UNIT TYPE	ASSIGNED	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
Engine	2	2	4
Squad	1	3	3
Truck	1	3	3
Safety Officer	1	1	1
Battalion Chief	1	1	1
District Chief	1	1	1
		ERF (NO)	13

PHASE 1	STAFF LEVEL	ALL SHIFTS
Advanced Firefighter	19	57
Apparatus Operator	19	57
Lieutenant (Squad)	3	9
Captain (Truck)	4	12
Safety Officer	2	6
Battalion Chief	2	6
District Chief	1	3
	50	150	18

STATION 1 AND STATION 14 CONSTRUCTED / IN SERVICE; AND ADDED STAFFING

PHASE 2	UNIT TYPE	INSERVICE	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
IMPROVED	Engine	11	2	22
LEVEL OF	Squad	3	4	12
SERVICE	Truck	4	4	16
YEAR 2 (FY27)	Safety Officer	2	1	2
	Battalion Chief	2	1	2
	District Chief	1	1	1
	Floater	2	1	2
			FTE	57

1st ALARM ASSIGNMENT			
UNIT TYPE	ASSIGNED	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
Engine	2	2	4
Squad	1	4	4
Truck	1	4	4
Safety Officer	1	1	1
Battalion Chief	1	1	1
District Chief	1	1	1
		ERF (NO)	15

PHASE 2	STAFF LEVEL	ALL SHIFTS
Advanced Firefighter	23	69
Apparatus Operator	22	66
Lieutenant (Squad)	3	9
Captain (Truck)	4	12
Safety Officer	2	6
Battalion Chief	2	6
District Chief	1	3
	57	171	21

ADDED STAFFING

PHASE 3	UNIT TYPE	INSERVICE	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
IMPROVED	Engine	11	3	33
LEVEL OF	Squad	3	4	12
SERVICE	Truck	4	4	16
YEAR 3 (FY28)	Safety Officer	2	1	2
	Battalion Chief	2	1	2
	District Chief	1	1	1
	Floater	2	1	2
			FTE	68

1st ALARM ASSIGNMENT			
UNIT TYPE	ASSIGNED	MIN STAFF	TOTAL
Engine	2	3	6
Squad	1	4	4
Truck	1	4	4
Safety Officer	1	1	1
Battalion Chief	1	1	1
District Chief	1	1	1
		ERF (YES)	17

PHASE 3	STAFF LEVEL	ALL SHIFTS
Advanced Firefighters	23	69
Apparatus Operator	22	66
Lieutenants	14	42
Captain (Truck)	4	12
Safety Officers	2	6
Battalion Chief	2	6
District Chief	1	3
	68	204	33

NOTES:

TOTAL 3 YEARS **72**

1. Need to add two more truck companies to meet ISO and NFPA response time requirements unless stations are relocated.

2. Plan does not account for annexation but will be adjusted as necessary.

KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES IN NFPA 1710

The minimum requirements for provision of emergency services by career fire departments can be found in NFPA 1710, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments*.

NFPA 1710 addresses the structure and operation of organizations providing such services, which include fire suppression and other assigned emergency response responsibilities such as EMS and special operations.

The requirements intend to provide effective, efficient, and safe protective services to help prevent fires, reduce risk to lives and property, deal with incidents that occur, and help prepare for anticipated incidents.

The requirements are listed in NFPA 1710 for fire department service deployment based on the type of occupancy, along with the appropriate response staffing levels for each. The minimum staffing level for each occupancy is listed below. For the full breakdown of staffing requirements by position, refer to the subsections specific to each occupancy in 5.2.4.

KEY REQUIREMENTS

Occupancy Type: Single-Family Dwelling
Deployment: Minimum of 16 members or 17 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 2000 ft^2 (186 m^2), two-story, single-family dwelling without a basement and with no exposures must provide for a minimum of 16 members (17 if an aerial device is used).

Occupancy Type: Open-Air Strip Mall
Deployment: Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical open-air strip shopping center ranging from 13,000 ft^2 to 196,000 ft^2 (1203 m^2 to 18,209 m^2) in size must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).

Occupancy Type: Garden-Style Apartment
Deployment: Minimum of 27 members or 28 if aerial device is used

The initial full alarm assignment to a structure fire in a typical 1200 ft^2 (111 m^2) apartment within a three-story, garden-style apartment building must provide for a minimum of 27 members (28 if an aerial device is used).

Occupancy Type: High-Rise
Deployment: Minimum of 42 members or 43 if building is equipped with fire pump

The initial full alarm assignment to a fire in a building with the highest floor greater than 75 ft (23 m) above the lowest level of fire department vehicle access must provide for a minimum of 42 members (43 if the building is equipped with a fire pump).

KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES IN NFPA 1710 *CONTINUED*

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Fire departments that respond to fires in occupancies that present hazards greater than those found in 5.2.4 must deploy additional resources on the initial alarm as described in 5.2.4.6.

Even though fireground staffing levels have changed, NFPA 1710 continues to require that engine companies be staffed with a minimum of four on-duty members, as stated in 5.2.3. In addition, 5.2.2.2.1 requires that the fire department identify minimum company staffing levels as necessary to meet the deployment criteria required in 5.2.4 to ensure that a sufficient number of members are assigned, on duty, and available to safely and effectively respond with each company.

Additional changes to the 2020 edition of the standard include an update to the definition for *career fire department* and a clarification of how to determine if the department would fall under either NFPA 1710 or NFPA 1720, *Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Volunteer Fire Departments.*

Several new definitions relating to geographic areas based on population density have been added and the number of responders needed based on the type of incident and tasks to accomplish has been included. New requirements have been added for mobile water supply tankers/tenders and deployment and training of incident safety officers. Also, material on wildland fire suppression has been expanded.

RESPONSE OBJECTIVES

Documenting the benchmarks and response objectives that make up NFPA 1710 is crucial to capturing and tracking data that would be helpful in ensuring the necessary allocation of resources.

Benchmarks	Response Objectives
Alarm answer	15 sec 95% of the time or 40 sec 99% of the time
Alarm processing	64 sec 95% of the time or 106 sec 99% of the time
Turnout - Fire	80 sec
Turnout - EMS	60 sec
First-due engine	240 sec (4 min) 90% of the time
Second-due engine	360 sec (6 min) 90% of the time
Initial full alarm - Low/medium hazard	480 sec (8 min) 90% of the time
Initial full alarm - High hazard	610 sec (10 min 10 sec) 90% of the time

Learn More

▶ Visit nfpa.org/1710 for free digital access to the standard.

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