



# Quick Response Team Report

June 26, 2014

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Contents

Executive Summary ..... 1

Methodology ..... 3

Kentucky community overview ..... 3

    STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 6

        Resource Library ..... 6

        Regional Approach ..... 6

        Demographic Reach ..... 7

        Technology ..... 8

        Partnerships ..... 10

        Leveraging Events ..... 11

Conclusion ..... 12

Appendix A Survey Questions ..... 13

Appendix B Partnerships-Social Service Agencies and Fire Safety ..... 17

Appendix C Current Fire Prevention Activities – Return on Investment? ..... 20

Appendix D QRT Members ..... 21

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Vision 20/20 (a project of the Institution of Fire Engineers) received a federal Department of Homeland Security Fire Prevention and Safety Grant to develop a Quick Response Team capability. The purpose of the QRT was to provide assistance in implementing components of Community Risk Reduction in communities that had just undergone a significant or tragic fire. It was felt that in a small community, after a tragic, large-scale fatal fire, they may not have the resources readily at hand to use the teachable moment to do outreach to the community. QRT was set up with four members strategically located across the United States that could respond on short notice to assist a local community.

As the project progressed, we found that we were having difficulty getting traction in a number of the communities we reached out. There were, however, three where we were successful (Cincinnati, Ohio; Guilford, North Carolina and Pikeville, Kentucky). In Guilford and Pikeville, the success was attributed to having QRT members in those two states that were able to make the contacts. In the case of Cincinnati, the fatal fire was campus related, which is an expertise of several members of the QRT.

In Cincinnati, at our suggestion, a multi-disciplinary task group was formed by the fire department to focus on the issues of off-campus fires. Members of this task group included public safety agencies, area schools, social service agencies and various city departments. A presentation was made by members of the QRT as well as a Vision 20/20 Steering Committee member from Cleveland who discussed the success of the Community Risk Reduction project in that city. In the months following, the city embarked on an education and outreach program to educate students about the problems associated with living off-campus that has become institutionalized within the fire department.

Members of the QRT traveled to Guilford County, North Carolina and Pikeville, Kentucky, and met with the AHJs. In both communities, there was interest in doing further CRR activities and in both cases the representatives did training for members of the jurisdictions.

Recognizing that we were not having the success that we had hoped for with the original QRT concept, we began to wonder why, and turned our attention to learning what barriers may exist to small communities using the QRT resources.

Kentucky, unfortunately, had a very high number of fatal fires within the first three months of 2013. To address this, State Fire Marshal William Swope assembled a task group of Kentucky fire safety professionals to work on identifying potential solutions. Members of the QRT worked with Marshal Swope on developing a strategic approach that this task group could possibly consider and presented on the CRR concept at the first Task Group meeting. This presented us with a unique opportunity to learn more about the barriers to fire prevention in small communities, which could explain why the QRT concept did not work as we had hoped.

In reviewing the incidents that had occurred and the history of CRR, we came to the realization that most of the projects that Vision 20/20 had undertaken were in large municipal fire departments and that we lacked experience in smaller, rural departments. The strategies that work in a city may not necessarily apply in a small, volunteer fire department in Kentucky. In the few cases where Vision 20/20 has tried implementing similar strategies in smaller departments, we have been unsuccessful, which brings us to the question-what will work?

To determine this, two QRT members met with five fire departments in Kentucky to learn more about the role of fire prevention within their departments. Site visits were done over a period of 2.5 days and the interviews were done using a standardized "script" of questions in order to develop consistency in the information that we gathered.

## ***Quick Response Team Report***

Realizing that this was a very small, but representative sample, a preliminary analysis of our findings was presented to members of the Kentucky Task Group for their opinion. The Task Group validated our findings and felt that they were consistent with what is seen in other fire departments and were credible.

There were six areas of focus that emerged, which are expanded upon in more detail later in this report:

- Resource Library
- Regional Approach
- Demographic Reach
- Technology
- Partnerships
- Leveraging Events

While this was a shift in the focus of the QRT concept, the information that we gained in conducting this research in Kentucky was invaluable and will help in developing future projects in similar-type communities and demographics across the nation.

**METHODOLOGY**

Five communities were selected for visits based on their size, location and demographics. In each case we met with members of the fire departments, but in some of them the representatives were also members of other departments, so we were able to gain an even broader perspective of the issue of fire prevention.

- Hazard
- Petersburg
- Shelby County
- Shelbyville
- West Knox Fire Protection District

We also conducted a series of telephone interviews with various social service and faith-based organizations.

**KENTUCKY COMMUNITY OVERVIEW**
**Profiles of Community**

This information was gathered during our visits and from Internet research of US Census data.

	<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Petersburg</b>	<b>Shelby County</b>	<b>Shelbyville</b>	<b>West Knox Fire Protection District</b>
<b>Department Type</b>	Paid	Call	Volunteer	Combination	Volunteer
<b># Members</b>	17 full, 29 call	Unknown	60	20 full, 10 part, 33 vol	
<b>Stations</b>	2	1	5	3	1
<b>Population</b>	5,477	620	43614	14858	
<b>Area, sq mi</b>	5.14		380	8	
<b>Density, persons/sq mi</b>	866		111		
<b>Demographic Information</b>	< 5 yrs 6.4% < 18 yrs 22% > 65 yrs 15%	<5 yrs 5.3% <20 yrs 27.9% >65 yrs 12.9%	<5 yrs 7% <18 yrs 24.8% >65 yrs 13.1%	<5 yrs 8.4% <18 yrs 28.7% >65 yrs 9.9%	
<b>Racial Makeup</b>	White 90% Black 6% Asian 1% Hispanic 0.4%	White 95% Black 0% Asian % Hispanic 1.1%	White 89% Black 7.6% Asian 0.8% Hispanic 9%	White 74.5% Black 12.8% Asian 0.8% Hispanic 17.8%	
<b>Poverty rate</b>	27% (State:18%)	11%	13%	19%	
<b>Housing units</b>	2,172	218	16731		
<b>Home ownership</b>	50%		72%	54%	
<b>Persons per household</b>	2.42		2.66	2.63	

## Findings

During the community site visits, we found that all were doing varying degrees of fire safety outreach and education. In no case did we identify anything that was being done that was detrimental or wrong, but, instead, we observed opportunities that could be expanded upon to be more impactful. In other words, there was an Impact Gap occurring, where opportunities to engage the citizen were not capitalized upon as effectively as might have been possible.

It is important to caution the reader that this Impact Gap Analysis was done in a series of five site visits to various fire departments located in different geographic regions of the state. In addition, they ranged from small, rural call departments to mid-size paid departments. Given that each site visit, which was preceded by a written request for some detailed statistics along with online research, generally lasted only 1.5 hours, we were limited in the amount of information that we could gather.

However, the preliminary findings of our site visits were validated at a presentation made before a Kentucky State Fire Marshal's Task Group meeting where the attendees confirmed the reasonableness of our findings and recommendations.

## Observations

- All are doing the traditional fire safety visits to schools during October.
- They are also doing annual fire safety fairs at large retail locations such as Walmart or Lowes. This involves having a booth set up in the parking lot along with other community organizations, such as the police department.
- Fire departments often participated in agricultural or community fairs by having a booth staffed by fire fighters where they would hand out material and speak to anyone that might stop by.
- No one is doing home fire safety visits unless specifically requested.
- No one was formally using social media or technology in reaching out to their communities. In some communities, the fire prevention officials were using their own personal social media platforms (Facebook) for outreach.
- All expressed a desire for additional material to use as handouts.

While, intuitively, the fire departments had what they felt was an idea of the makeup of their community (age, race, problem areas, etc.), none of them had any type of partnerships that would help with outreach into the various demographics. This was particularly noted in two fire departments that mentioned they have issues with high fire risk in the Hispanic community, but did not have any liaisons that would help them work with this demographic.

Home fire safety visits done by fire fighters are recognized as an effective strategy in helping to improve fire safety in a community. This is a strategy that has been heavily promoted by Vision 20/20 in its Community Risk Reduction project in a number of sites across the country, especially when done in partnership with other organizations, such as social service agencies. However, for the most part, these are relatively large, municipal fire departments in urban settings where it is easier to assign fire department personnel, on duty, to undertake these efforts.

There were no such programs in all five of the departments that we visited for a number of reasons. In addition, the people we interviewed felt that it would be difficult to implement a wide, proactive program. (It is important to note that everyone realized the value of such a program, but that it would be difficult to undertake within their jurisdiction.)

- Lack of personnel In some cases, we are talking about departments that have only 15 members and they just do not have the time available. The idea of using older, retired or auxiliary departments was raised, but this was not seen as a viable option for any department. It was felt that these older members are often "old school" and would not be able to communicate effectively or be up to speed on today's fire prevention strategies. Younger people are not volunteering at a very high rate and often the

**Quick Response Team Report**

type of volunteers that do step forward are not interested in fire prevention, they want to be wearing turnouts and going on fire calls.

- Lack of money The departments we visited were a mixture of paid/call/volunteer and funding was a predominant issue in most cases. Almost universally, they expressed the need to acquire materials or resources that would help them do more effective outreach and that funding was a barrier. Their fund raising efforts are focused on replacing or acquiring equipment, not on fire prevention needs.
- Lack of time In the paid departments, there are many demands upon fire fighters time that included training and response. In the call/volunteer departments, members are often working multiple jobs because of the economy and they do not have the time to devote to home fire safety visits.
- Lack of partnerships No one we interviewed had a formal relationship with any social service agency or faith-based group that might be leveraged to help gain entry into the homes. Given the previous three observations (lack of personnel, time and money) building partnerships would be a very effective solution.
- Barriers in the community While there may be some people in the community interested in having a home fire safety visit done, the overall impression is that there would be others resistant to the idea. In one community, the fear of getting shot while trying to approach homes in certain areas was expressed, and in another there are an extraordinarily high number of drug labs in residences that would create an unsafe scenario for home fire safety visits.

## STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Following these interviews, the team members discussed what they observed and the impact gaps that emerged. There are six areas where we saw the possibility of improving impact. All six of these recommendations were presented to the Kentucky State Fire Marshal's Task Force and there was unanimous agreement that these are viable potential solutions.

- Resource Library
- Regional Approach
- Demographic Reach
- Technology
- Partnerships
- Leveraging Events

### Resource Library

Each department that we met with talked about the need for resources to do outreach. When asked for examples, they would mention coloring books, home safety checklists, handouts, plastic fire helmets or giveaways to use during events. (Note: Access to smoke alarms did not seem to be an issue, these could be obtained through donations from retail vendors.)

#### Recommendation

There are a number of free resources that are available from organizations such as the United States Fire Administration, the National Fire Protection Association and private sector companies such as The Hartford insurance company. In addition, there is a wealth of free fire safety videos available on YouTube that could be used in fire safety outreach. An easily navigable web site that provides links to these free resources could be created and hosted by the Kentucky State Fire Marshal's Office, the Kentucky Firefighters Association or any other similar organization within the state. A YouTube channel can be set up that is a compilation of approved fire safety videos that can be used during outreach programs (see more under the Technology section of this report).

### Regional Approach

Many of the fire departments in Kentucky are small, rural departments. It is difficult for each of them to provide their own fire prevention efforts within their community because of the limitations on personnel, time, money and other resources.

#### Recommendation

Adopt a regional "fire prevention mutual aid" approach to doing fire safety education and outreach. By pooling together instructors and other personnel into teams, it would then be possible to deploy them into a community to provide fire safety education outreach. This would also be a way to tap into different levels of expertise. In one case, an educator might be strong in teaching children, in another community the person might have an expertise with senior citizens and a third might be very good with social media. By creating a regional team, these different areas of expertise can be pulled together and then used in a focused way.



Furthermore, by developing a team approach, a team could be deployed to assist communities in the aftermath of a tragic incident, using a localized version of the QRT approach. Having a team made up of Kentuckians assisting other Kentucky fire departments would help overcome a potential barrier of people from outside of the region coming in to assist.

These fire prevention mutual aid teams could be organized on any level that seems appropriate. County level, if there is a strong county fire safety infrastructure in place, or more informally with adjoining communities agreeing to work together and share resources.

## Demographic Reach

Everyone we spoke with is doing programs in the lower elementary schools, generally once a year during fire prevention week/month. However, this leaves a massive gap when it comes to reaching people who are more in need of fire safety information and those who make decisions such as whether or not to install smoke alarms in a home. Young adults, senior citizens, parents, homeowners—there is a huge demographic of people that are not routinely receiving fire safety information. These are the people that are the most critical in ensuring the safety of the home.

While fire departments should definitely continue this outreach to the younger demographic, it has not been as effective as hoped on making an impact in the home (both in Kentucky and across the nation) and generally it has not continued as the young students get older. In other words, the message has not matured with the audience and has not resulted in as fire-safe a society as hoped because of a lack of follow-through. The messaging that we have been using in the past as well has been counterproductive. For example, one major Kentucky fire department has stopped emphasizing the “stop, drop and roll” message because that has become the rote answer to any fire safety situation. A great example of a sticky message, but one that is being used or remembered inappropriately.

Furthermore, depending upon which part of the state we were visiting, there is a large Hispanic population that works in agriculture. In one case, they are a migrant population, only there for nine months. In another case, they have wound up staying in the community. In both instances, there is no liaison between the fire department and the Hispanic population to help foster a positive attitude towards fire safety. In the community where the Hispanic population was settling in, the fire department reported that they were seeing more interaction with the Hispanic businesses, but this was as a result of punitive code enforcement action, not positive outreach efforts.

## Recommendation

Identify the demographics within the community where there is currently no outreach activity (age, race) and develop strategies that can create bridges to these demographics. For specific groups, such as Hispanics, either identify an existing liaison (such as in the health department, police department, faith-based, etc.) who can be used to build positive relationships.

Develop programs that provide a continuum of fire safety information throughout a person’s life, starting with elementary through the senior citizen years. The messages must mature with the audience (for example, young children encourage their parents to test smoke alarms whereas adults are now responsible for installing and testing smoke alarms). By creating a series of seamless messages, it is possible to develop a transition from relying on others to that of personal responsibility when it comes to fire safety.

## Technology

When it came to social media, there were a variety of responses. Some departments are not using it all, while others are using it intermittently or relying on personal Facebook accounts, not official department accounts.

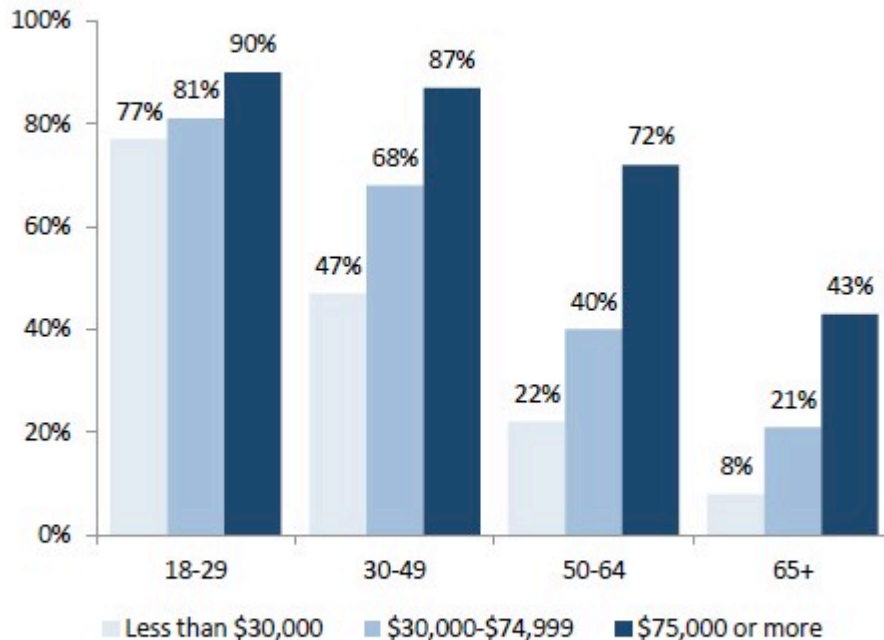
When asked about how connected the communities are (Internet broadband), for the most part the respondents felt that the people in their communities were generally connected, either in their homes or by smartphones. (Smartphone ownership seemed to cut across all socio-economic demographics, according to those interviewed). In a recent article at [www.nbcnews.com](http://www.nbcnews.com) "[It's not a BlackBerry, but it's helping me for now": Cellphones are now essentials for the poor](#)", it was pointed out that cell phones are becoming vital lifelines for the poor. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [Lifeline](#) program offers a discounted monthly telephone rate of \$9.25 per month for landline or wireless phones for people who are earning less than 135% of the federal poverty rate.

For the first time, cellphone ownership across the United States has now exceeded 90%, according to the Pew Research Center.

- 91% [percent of Americans own a cell phone](#)
- 56% of cell phones are smart phones
- 43% of people with a household income under \$30,000 own a smart phone
- 40% of people in rural America have a smart phone

**Smartphone ownership by income/age grouping**

% within each age/income grouping who own a smartphone (example: 77% of 18-29 year olds with an annual household income of less than \$30,000 are smartphone owners)



Source: Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, April 17-May 19, 2013 Tracking Survey. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish and on landline and cell phones. Margin of error is +/-2.3 percentage points based on all adults (n=2,252).

In regards to home broadband usage, another report by the [Pew Research Center](#) found that 70% of Americans connect to the Internet through home broadband and this is relatively consistent among urban, suburban and rural communities. Given the technology constraints, the penetration in rural areas is less, yet still significant.

**Percentage of households that have home broadband by geographic location**

- 70% urban
- 73% suburban
- 62% rural

When viewed by household income levels, there is a significant disparity:

**Percentage of households with home broadband usage by household income**

- 54% household income less than \$30,000/year
- 70% household income between \$30,000 and \$49,999/year
- 84% household income between \$50,000 and \$74,999/year
- 88% household income greater than \$75,000/year

In a survey, 92% of Kentuckians have access to broadband (it does not clarify where they access it), but that Kentucky ranks 40<sup>th</sup> in availability in comparison with other states and 47<sup>th</sup> in terms of Internet usage.<sup>1</sup>

The demographic that is being focused on (ages 20 to 50) that is presently generally not being served is one that is making extensive use of social media, primarily Facebook. A tragic example of this is that in one fatal fire in West Knox, where two adults and six children were killed in an early morning fire, the expectant mother had put a post on Facebook at 3:00 a.m. about how they had just finished painting the baby's bedroom.

#### Recommendation

This is an area that is especially ripe for expansion, but the impression that we had is that fire departments are not sure exactly how to use social media to their benefit. We would recommend that a training program in using social media for fire prevention outreach be developed.

Also, there was some concern about official social media policies for fire departments, a concern that is not unique to Kentucky. Policies should be developed that would allow for effective use of various social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Vine, Instagram, etc.) by department members.

#### **Partnerships**

In none of the departments that we visited with were there any established partnerships with non-fire organizations that could be leveraged. Vision 20/20 has seen this as an effective avenue in larger communities that could also possibly be applied in smaller, rural communities. Social service agencies (such as county health departments, Meals on Wheels, Visiting Nurses, etc.) are in the homes on a regular basis and are a recognized face by the occupants that they are comfortable with.

Faith-based organizations are another key avenue into the home that can be used. In one case, in a relatively small fire protection district, there were 49 churches. This is an incredible network that can be built upon. This is such an important component that it is covered in more detail in Appendix B

#### Recommendation

Identify the social service agencies that are working in a community and approach them about the idea of training their personnel in identifying basic fire safety hazards in a home, such as missing or non-working smoke alarms, overloaded outlets, poor heating practices, cooking, smoking, etc. These concerns could then be passed onto the fire department for follow up.

Also, explore the possibility of fire department personnel accompanying the social service worker on visits that would help facilitate entry into the home. By letting the social service agency take the lead, this would help make the occupant more comfortable with the presence of the fire personnel.

It is also important to consider having personnel dressed in more casual clothing rather than a formal "blue shirt and badge" style. Given that one community has a significant number of drug labs and another

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<sup>1</sup> Report on KY broadband

[http://finance.ky.gov/initiatives/Broadband/Documents/Regional%20Broadband%20Utilization%20Analysis%20e-Strategy%20Report%20\(May%202012\).pdf](http://finance.ky.gov/initiatives/Broadband/Documents/Regional%20Broadband%20Utilization%20Analysis%20e-Strategy%20Report%20(May%202012).pdf)

Demographic of social media users <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Social-media-users.aspx>

Who uses social media <http://www.pewinternet.org/Commentary/2012/March/Pew-Internet-Social-Networking-full-detail.aspx>

mentioned a large number of illegal apartments housing Hispanic workers, the presence of an official with a badge might be misinterpreted as being a branch of law enforcement.

## Leveraging Events

All five of the departments are actively doing safety fairs at locations such as Lowe's or Walmart or during community events such as agricultural fairs. However, these tend to be more passive where they set up a booth in a parking lot and rely on people stopping by and then they are given a brochure with more information. We felt that these presented opportunities that could be expanded upon significantly by using strategies that would more actively engage the people passing by.

Most shoppers are going to these stores to buy items other than smoke alarms. The goal is to create sufficient awareness in their minds that they will actually leave with a smoke alarm in their possession. However, it is probably reasonable to assume that this does not happen, so a more active approach is needed for this desirable end result.

### Recommendation

We discussed a strategy of turning these opportunities into a fund-raiser that will also put a smoke alarm into the hands of the passerby, which would work as follows.

The store donates a cache of smoke alarms to the fire department that then offers them to the passerby in return for a donation. This could be a fund-raiser for the fire department or any local charity (Little League, food pantry, etc.). By doing so, a smoke alarm is put into the hands of the passerby and they have demonstrated some commitment by making a donation (they have some "skin in the game," in other words).

At the same time, there are personnel at the event that are immediately available to go to the person's home, if needed, to help with the installation. Or, a date and time could be scheduled for someone to stop on by and assist.

While it is recognized that smoke alarm giveaway programs are not as desirable as actually going into the homes to install them, in these situations where home fire safety visits are difficult, this could be a viable alternative. It is also an opportunity to engage with the passerby and conduct a transaction (getting a smoke alarm into their hands versus relying on them to buy one inside of the store) and provide them with information as well (proper placement of smoke alarms). If going into the home to install a smoke alarm is not a viable solution, then by at least giving the person a smoke alarm, some action is being taken. While not as effective as a home fire safety visit, it is certainly better than NOT doing anything at all.

Furthermore, if this event is done in conjunction with a local charity, such as Little League, for example, it is an opportunity to engage with others, such as the Little Leaguers and their parents, and teach them about fire safety at the same time.

At events such as agricultural fairs, it probably is not a viable strategy to give out smoke alarms (who wants to carry them around during the fair? They will probably wind up being thrown away.) Also, handing out literature does not work as this is almost immediately thrown away.

To engage the passerby in this situation, it might be possible to have a great giveaway item such as a desirable T-shirt (sports team, etc.) that they can get by "liking" the fire department's Facebook page or following them on Twitter, on the spot, using their cell phones or a computer set up by the fire department at the booth. This builds on the fact that so many people have smart phones (see the Technology section of this report) and that they can easily do this from their mobile devices. In return, the department gets more followers that it can reach out to via social media.

It is important to stress that the reward for following or Liking the department has to have something of perceived value to the passerby. Simple items, such as pens or pencils with logos or information on them are not sufficient. A T-shirt with a fire safety message on it also does not work (no one wants to walk around wearing them). In a state like Kentucky with such strong pride in the university sports teams, getting T-shirts or sports paraphernalia donated by the schools or local businesses to underwrite purchasing them can be a viable strategy.

## CONCLUSION

The information gained through the site visits and the recommendations made in this report were validated by the members of the Kentucky State Fire Marshal's Task Group as being ones that could 1) be implemented and 2) would have a reasonable impact on fire safety within the state. While the focus of this study was within the borders of Kentucky, efforts were made to look at rural communities with different demographic and geographical makeups so that the results would also be applicable to other communities across the nation. Providing fire prevention information in rural settings is a challenge, but it is an important one that must be overcome using creativity and, most importantly, partnerships that can help leverage the community's resources.

Vision 20/20 appreciates all of the support that was provided by the communities and their representatives that participated in this study and made it possible.

**APPENDIX A SURVEY QUESTIONS**

A series of standardized questions were developed to gather information on each fire department that was visited.

**1. Fire department****1.1. Activity level**

1.1.1. Number of calls

1.1.2. Number of working fires

**1.2. Fire loss and stats (causes, etc.)**

1.2.1. What has the fire loss for the past five years been like

1.2.2. Deaths/injuries

1.2.3. Cause

1.2.4. Dollar loss

**1.3. Size of the department**

1.3.1. Number of members

1.3.2. Number of active members

1.3.3. Number of officers

1.3.4. What is recruitment like?

**1.4. What is a typical response time?****1.5. Training schedule**

1.5.1. This would give us an idea of how often the department gets together and how often they could possibly do fire prevention activities.

**1.6. Average age of members**

1.6.1. Older/retired members

1.6.2. Would they be a resource to use

1.6.3. Computer literacy

**2. Demographic info on the community**

2.1. Average age

2.2. Poverty level

2.3. Education level

2.4. Racial makeup

**3. Housing stock**

3.1. High-risk occupancies

3.2. Elderly housing

3.3. Low-income areas





4. Prevention
  - 4.1. **Current fire prevention activities**
  - 4.2. **Perceived fire problem**
  - 4.3. What would be the reaction of the community
  - 4.4. Need for smoke alarms
  - 4.5. Previous outreach efforts
    - 4.5.1. Did they work/not work? Why?
  - 4.6. What suggestions would you have to reach out to community members?
  - 4.7. What would be a good time to do community outreach?
    - 4.7.1. Weeknights
    - 4.7.2. Weekdays
    - 4.7.3. Weekends
  - 4.8. Could this be a part of the FD training program?
  - 4.9. What type of training would be needed to bring FF up to speed on fire prevention?
  - 4.10. What kind of educational resources would you need?
  - 4.11. Do you currently have a fire prevention champion in the fire department?
  - 4.12. Have you had an incident that has really focused the community's attention on fire prevention?
5. Connectivity
  - 5.1. Is there widespread connectivity?
    - 5.1.1. Dialup
    - 5.1.2. DSL
    - 5.1.3. Cable
    - 5.1.4. Satellite

6. Media
  - 6.1. Newspapers
    - 6.1.1. What newspapers service the community
    - 6.1.2. Frequency
  - 6.2. Television
    - 6.2.1. What television stations service the community
  - 6.3. Radio
    - 6.3.1. What radio stations service the community
  - 6.4. Social media
    - 6.4.1. Would social media be an avenue, given the demographics of the community
7. Campaigns
  - 7.1. Door to door campaigns
8. What are other risks in the community that could possibly be addressed?
9. Partners
  - 9.1. Social service agencies
    - 9.1.1. Which ones
    - 9.1.2. Have you worked with them before?
  - 9.2. Schools
    - 9.2.1. Are the schools an avenue?
    - 9.2.2. K-12
    - 9.2.3. Higher Education
  - 9.3. Faith-based/churches
    - 9.3.1. What ones are in the community?
    - 9.3.2. Is this an avenue?
  - 9.4. Industry/retail
    - 9.4.1. Big-box stores (Home Depot, Lowes, Wal-Mart, etc.)
    - 9.4.2. Industry
  - 9.5. Other
10. Information
  - 10.1. What kind of information would you want to put into the hands of the residents?
  - 10.2. What format would be good? Print, video, audio, door hangers, etc.

**APPENDIX B PARTNERSHIPS-SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES AND FIRE SAFETY****Fire Safety Health**

A healthy lifestyle involves a number of different components that may include things such as good nutrition and diet, exercise, moderate alcohol consumption and avoiding negative factors such as smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke, among others. The environment in which people live is a factor in a healthy lifestyle as well. We want to avoid living next to a Superfund site or downwind of a factory's emissions that we would be breathing every day. On a smaller scale, more attention is being given to factors in the home that may be contributing to our health and well being, such as the recent concern of the use of BPA chemicals in plastic drinking containers.

Just as much a part of this is the fire safety health of the individual, family and community.

This is a term that is not widely used, "fire safety health," but consider that living a fire-safe lifestyle can have just as much an impact on the well being of someone and those around them. Fires kill, injure and create toxic environments.

In meeting with the fire departments, and in discussions with other fire safety professionals across the nation, the value of partnerships comes up a number of times. Fire departments, who traditionally take on the task of fire prevention, have come to the realization that they cannot effectively do it on their own, for several reasons, which include

- Staffing
- Funding
- Time

For these reasons, partnering with other organizations that can help increase the reach of the fire department can be an invaluable way to get into the homes. Much mention is made of partnering with social service agencies, so as part of this project, we reached out to several health departments and social service agencies for their feedback.

As with fire departments, these organizations are also seeing funding cutbacks which force them to change how they function. One activity that they may not be doing is home health visits unless they have specific grant funding. However, they are continuing to provide clinic based services, which could be an opportunity to engage with the clients about fire safety.

When the clinics are doing intakes, those interviewed are not asked fire-safety related questions. However, they reported that it would not be difficult for them to ask questions such as whether the client has smoke alarms, are they working, do they test them, etc. They may be asked if they are smokers, but this is from a health perspective, not from a fire safety one. Based on the response to the questions, then a course of action could be offered to the client, such as getting smoke alarms installed, discussing fire-safe lifestyle practices, or having a home fire safety visit made by the fire department.

To implement this, there are two needs that we observed:

- A brief, no more than one page, guidance on what to ask and then
- What possible action should be taken based on the responses

It is important to provide the social service agency with specific actions that they can take and in as simple a manner as possible. For example, if smoke alarms are needed, if a social service agency serves multiple jurisdictions, rather than have the social service agency determine which AHJ they need to call to have smoke alarms installed it may be more effective if they had one, centralized point of contact for home fire safety issues that they could contact (such as at the county or state level) that would then be responsible for reaching out to the appropriate AHJ for action. In other words, try to make the process as frictionless as possible.

There are several benefits of partnering with social service agencies:

- These are organizations and personnel that are recognized in the community and, in essence, may be familiar faces to the clients.
- These agencies may be working with demographics that the fire department does not have any existing relationship, may have an adversarial relationship, or may be perceived negatively by the demographic.
- In cases where the social service agency may be engaged in home health care, by teaching the staff about basic fire safety features that they can watch for (presence of smoke alarms, testing them, cooking or smoking problems, etc.) and providing them with a point of contact when they observe a problem, the reach of the fire department can be expanded significantly.
- Social service agencies may very well be working with the very demographic that is statistically at a higher risk from fires, which includes the elderly, people with disabilities, low income and minorities.
- This will allow for a more focused use of fire department resources towards the homes where fire safety problems may lie, rather than just using a broadcast method of canvassing an entire neighborhood.

One issue that needs to be addressed and resolved would be the collection of data based on these inquiries. This would be invaluable information to have to evaluate the fire safety health of a community, but with the following considerations in mind:

- Personal identifying information should not be reported unless it is necessary to facilitate follow up action by an AHJ.
- Reporting this information by the social service agency should be as easy as possible and within the framework of existing data collection/reporting systems. If a new reporting system is imposed, it would be perceived as an additional burden and, in all likelihood, would not be used as widely, defeating its purpose.

#### Action Items

- Develop a simplified, one-page list of questions that social service agency providers can ask their clients about fire safety. This should be developed with input from these providers as to the type of questions that can be asked and how many would be reasonable.
- This same one-pager should include some basic fire safety information as well so that the provider has an understanding of rationale behind the questions.
- Wherever this process is being implemented, a single point of contact that the social service agency can contact whenever there is a need for home fire safety visits or smoke alarm installations will be instrumental in helping to make this as frictionless as possible for the social service personnel. That point of contact can then determine which AHJ is the appropriate one to contact the client for follow-up.
- Develop a reporting system for collecting aggregate fire safety health information with the social service agency personnel in mind. To help ensure its success, this should, ideally, be within an existing data collection system.

In the course of research, it was learned that there are social service agencies that are engaged in doing home fire safety visits and smoke alarm installations. They are to be lauded for this effort in helping to improve the community's fire safety health. To maximize the effectiveness of these programs, they should be encouraged to work closely with the local AHJ and make sure the appropriate fire safety messages are being used and that there is a cohesive data collection methodology being employed.

#### Data collection

Collecting data from the home fire safety visits, as well as data on the fire safety health of the community can help significantly in developing focused strategies. By knowing the community's current fire safety health, specific problems that need to be addressed can be identified, allowing for a more focused, evidence-based approach.

The data collected can help in this effort by identifying the issues that are routinely being addressed (is it missing smoke alarms? Cooking fire safety education? Egress?).

In both cases, this data can be instrumental in identifying what resources are needed and providing justification for acquiring these resources, whether it is personnel, equipment or supplies.

**APPENDIX C CURRENT FIRE PREVENTION ACTIVITIES – RETURN ON INVESTMENT?**

Fire departments could take a more analytical look at their fire prevention activities with the view of whether what they are doing is actually accomplishing the goal of improving fire safety within their community.

A good example of this is fire prevention fairs. These events require staffing, apparatus, material and other resources. However, how many people do they actually engage with, and how effective is this engagement? Does giving someone a brochure, a handout, a magnet, a pen, actually advance the cause of fire prevention?

The same might be said for fire station open houses. Generally, a small microcosm of the population takes part in these activities and the case can be made for how truly effective they really are when it comes to fire prevention.

Of course, there may be other reasons to do these events, such as increasing the public's awareness of the fire department or trying to improve community engagement. These activities may have a valuable political role of making the fire department more visible which can help when it comes to budgeting, increased staffing, etc. However, in terms of moving the fire prevention needle on the dial, the return on investment may be minimal.

Also, the intense focus that is seen in a number of fire departments on teaching fire safety to children should be looked at more analytically as well. Yes, it is important to teach this demographic about fire safety, but not at the expense of the other age groups. We have been teaching stop, drop and roll for well over 30 years now, so shouldn't we have the most fire-safe generation in their 20's, 30's and 40's? Since the number of fire deaths is not decreasing significantly, the argument can be made that we have not been as effective as we could be or, perhaps more importantly, we are not following through with the fire safety education we are giving children as they grow older, with more personal responsibilities. In other words, the message is not maturing with the audience and we are not effectively following through with this initial fire safety push.

**APPENDIX D QRT MEMBERS****Frank Blackley**

Asst. Chief Blackley currently serves as the Administrative Services Chief for the Wilmington, North Carolina FD. A native of Wilmington, his fire service background began in 1979 as a volunteer at the Winter Park Fire Dept. in Wilmington and was also a member of the Pinecroft-Sedgefield Fire Dept. in Greensboro, NC while attending college. Prior employment included time with the Wrightsville Beach Fire Department and New Hanover County Fire Services. Mr. Blackley has also served as Fire Marshal and Operations Chief for the Wilmington Fire Dept. He served two terms as President of the North Carolina Fire Marshal's Association during 2007 and 2008. He has completed Executive Fire Officer's Program and has a Masters of Public Administration from UNC Wilmington.

He is currently serving on one of five task forces as part of the national Vision 20/20 project to reduce fire loss in the United States.

**Monica Colby**

Monica Colby is a Fire and Life Safety Specialist with the Rapid City Fire Department in South Dakota and the Northwest Region Education Field Advisor for the NFPA Public Education Division. She has been a fire and life safety educator since 1998 serving as a city, district, state, and regional fire and life safety educator. She is a South Dakota Fire Corps State Advocate, a citizen volunteer for her local fire department, and serves on the NFPA Education Section Board of Directors.

**Ed Comeau**

Ed Comeau is the owner of writer-tech.com, a technical writing firm that publishes Campus Firewatch, a monthly electronic newsletter. He is the communications manager for the Institution of Fire Engineers project Vision 20/20 and has been closely involved in a number of DHS Fire Prevention and Safety Grants relating to campus fire safety that have been awarded to the Michael H. Minger Foundation, the Center for Campus Fire Safety and the People's Burn Foundation of Indiana.

Mr. Comeau was the chief fire investigator for the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Investigations department and was responsible for the management of the department and conducted investigations of a number of major incidents, including The Oklahoma City bombing, the Kobe, Japan earthquake, the airport terminal fire in Düsseldorf, Germany, the English Channel Tunnel fire and the Gothenburg, Sweden disco fire

Before joining NFPA, Mr. Comeau was a fire protection engineer for the Phoenix Fire Department where he was responsible for helping to organize the department's Urban Search and Rescue program and developing training material for the department's technical rescue program in the areas of structural collapse, trench rescue and confined space operations. Prior to joining the Phoenix Fire Department he was a call fire fighter for the Amherst, Massachusetts, Fire Department.

Mr. Comeau holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

**Corey Lewis**

Corey Lewis began his career in the fire service in 2002 with the Cobb Hill volunteer fire department in Estill County, Kentucky. This rural community in eastern Kentucky was in need of increased fire protection and as such Corey was tasked with creating and developing along with other community leaders and elected officials a fire department to serve this rural community. Corey quickly moved through the ranks to become the Assistant Chief of the department. During his time establishing the volunteer fire department a passion for a fulltime career in the fire service arose. He joined the City of Richmond fire department in 2005 where he began overseeing media relations for the fire department. In 2008 Corey was tasked with establishing and managing the fire prevention and public education bureau of the Richmond fire department. Corey is responsible for overseeing the department's public education and fire prevention programming as well as managing the department's community and social media relations. Corey is well respected among city leaders for his professionalism and his ability to build strong relations between the community and the fire department leadership. Corey has been noted for his work on national fire prevention campaigns and the reduction in residential home fire fatalities and injuries in his community. In previous leadership roles his service includes, Kentucky firefighter's association fire prevention board member, executive board member of the Bluegrass Emergency Response Team, and a member of the Madison County Safety coalition.

**Gail Minger**

Gail Minger is president of the Michael H. Minger Foundation which she formed after the death of her son, Michael, in a residence hall fire at Murray State University. Gail has become a national advocate for fire safety for all students, with a special emphasis on students with disabilities. She was instrumental in the passage of the Michael H. Minger Act in Kentucky and has worked on national legislation, education and awareness. In 2007, the Minger Foundation was awarded a DHS Fire Prevention and Safety Grant to study the level of awareness of the issue of fire safety for students with disabilities on campuses across the nation. This study found that there is a lack of awareness among schools as to the fire safety needs of these students, which led to another grant being awarded in 2009 to develop fire safety information for students with disabilities. The Foundation has developed a number of resources focusing on student fire safety including teaching guides, videos and posters, all of which are freely available from its web site at [www.mingerfoundation.org](http://www.mingerfoundation.org).

The Foundation was also awarded a grant to develop a Campus Fire Safety Community Service Project which was implemented in a number of communities. The objective of this project was to engage the students alongside fire fighters in conducting home fire safety visits and installing smoke alarms in high-risk homes in the community.

The Minger Foundation underwrote a response to Emporia, Kansas, by Firefighter Corey Lewis from the Richmond (KY) Fire Department following the death of two international students in an off-campus apartment fire. The goal of this response was to provide assistance to the AHJ in implementing campus fire safety outreach programs in the community in the teachable moment after this tragedy.



**Mike Senchyna**

Mike retired in 2010 as Battalion Chief after 30 years with the Vancouver Fire Department (Washington). Over the course of his career, Mike worked on a variety of planning, public outreach and other programs, with an emphasis on applying science to fire service and community risk issues. He spent his entire career in operations. As a BC for the last 10 years, he served as one of the city's primary incident commanders for all significant incidents, in addition to managing a dozen or more company officers.

Natural disaster preparation and response has been a major focus of interest for him, and remains so. While with Vancouver, he was also actively involved in wildland fire suppression statewide, as well as local wildland public education and NWCG training. He served on the SW Washington Type 3 All-Risk Incident Management Team for a number of years. He is a graduate of the NFA's Executive Fire Officer Program, and has a BS from Portland State University (Geology).

Because of his experiences in Vancouver, Mike became involved in the Vision 20/20 CRR effort, and participated in the development and pilot course delivery of the CRR curriculum. He has taught one-day Vision 20/20 CRR courses in Wilmington, NC, Cleveland, OH, suburban Minneapolis, MN, and elsewhere.

Subsequent to the Vision 20/20 course development, Mike was selected as one of the subject matter experts for the development of the NFA's new 6-day CRR course, "Conducting Local Risk Reduction by Company Officers."