# Service Area Plan

## *Department of Fire Programs*

### *Virginia Fire Services Research (74402)*

## Service Area Background Information

### Service Area Description

VDFP gathers and uses data from the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System and other sources to provide information regarding "Fire In Virginia." VDFP provides information in the form of reports and studies pertinent to the fire and emergency services community by gleaning information from subject matter resources and experts.

### Service Area Alignment to Mission

Providing fire and emergency service related research is specifically mentioned in VDFP's mission statement.

### Service Area Statutory Authority

§ 9.1-203. Powers and duties of Virginia Fire Services Board; limitation.

6. Develop and implement a statewide plan for the collection, analysis and reporting of data relating to fires in the Commonwealth, utilizing appropriate resources of other state agencies when deemed proper by the Board;

This data collected is a fundamental in reporting the state of "Fire in Virginia" which is pivotal to all fire and emergency service related research.

### Service Area Customer Base

| Customer(s) | Served | Potential |
|---|---|---|
| Citizens of the Commonwealth | 7,459,827 | 7,459,827 |
| Fire and Emergency Services | 23,141 | 30,000 |
| Government (state and local) | 400 | 400 |

### Service Area Partners

#### Public and Private Organizations

VDFP works with public and private organizations on research projects of mutual interest. We hold stakeholder meetings which allow across-the-board input to provide the most comprehensive information possible.

### Service Area Partners

#### State Agencies

VDFP partners with other state agencies who are interested in first responder issues to share information and data and to collaborate on items of mutual interest.

## Service Area Products and Services

- Needs Assessment of Virginia's Fire Service:
  • It is critical to maintain the foundation laid by the 2004 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.  Yearly, less extensive, on-line questionnaires will allow benchmarking and identifying trends in resources, training, and staffing.

- Fire In Virginia:
  • Communicating fire information is of paramount importance to VDFP and Virginia's fire service.  By producing an annual report highlighting fire trends in Virginia we afford our stakeholders and policy makers with solid information at the state level.

- Ad Hoc Studies:
  • Being proactive in providing fire related studies is of paramount importance.  With the use of VFIRS data, VDFP will identify fire trends in Virginia and produce ad hoc studies to help raise awareness of these issues.

### Factors Impacting Service Area Products and Services

The main source of fire related data is from the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS). VFIRS is a voluntary reporting system, therefore only approximately 50 percent of Virginia fire departments report into the system (as of 1/7/04), which covers an estimated 75 percent of the population.  VFIRS data is totally dependant upon user input and therefore often the data is incomplete and human error must be taken into account.

### Anticipated Changes To Service Area Products and Services

With the addition of a FTE Fire Research Analyst, VDFP expects to increase the number of ad hoc studies and enhance our current efforts.

## Service Area Human Resources Summary

### Service Area Human Resources Overview

The research function at the Virginia Department of Fire Programs primarily falls under the Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs Division. The Division has a staff of 2 FTEs (1 FTE position currently vacant) and 1 P14. Dedicated work load impact in relation to our research mission is as follows:

• FTE - Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs Manager (25%)
• FTE - Fire Research Analyst (currently vacant) (100%)
• P14 - VFSB Clerk/Research Assistant (20%)

It is important to note that fire service data is provided by the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System which is  managed by an FTE Information and Statistics Manager and 2 P14s.

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**Service Area Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Position Summary**

Effective Date:     7/1/2005

Total Authorized Position level ............................... 2

Vacant Positions .................................................. 1

    Non-Classified (Filled)............................ 0

    Full-Time Classified (Filled) ................... 1

    Part-Time Classified (Filled) ................. 0

    Faculty (Filled) ..................................... 0

Wage .................................................................. 1

Contract Employees ............................................. 0

Total Human Resource Level ................................ **2**

**Factors Impacting Service Area Human Resources**

The Division has a staff of 2 FTEs (1 FTE position currently vacant) and 1 P14. Dedicated work load impact in relation to our research mission is as follows:

- FTE - Policy, Planning, and Legislative Affairs Manager (25%)
- FTE - Fire Research Analyst (currently vacant - new authorized position as of July 1, 2005) (100%)
- P14 - VFSB Clerk/Research Assistant (20%)

It is important to note that fire service data is provided by the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System which is  managed by an FTE Information and Statistics Manager.

**Anticipated Changes in Service Area Human Resources**

## Service Area Financial Summary

The budget for Virginia Fire Services Research comes from the special revenue Fire Programs Fund.  The budget comprises of burdened salaries and related program/project products.

|  | Fiscal Year 2007 | | Fiscal Year 2008 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **General Fund** | **Nongeneral Fund** | **General Fund** | **Nongeneral Fund** |
| **Base Budget** | $0 | $355,000 | $0 | $355,000 |
| **Changes To Base** | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **SERVICE AREA TOTAL** | **$0** | **$355,000** | **$0** | **$355,000** |

# Service Area Plan

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## Service Area Objectives, Measures, and Strategies

### Objective 74402.R1

#### *To communicate fire information and issues to stakeholders and the public*

Communicating fire information is of paramount importance to VDFP and to Virginia's fire service. VDFP provides reports highlighting fire trends in Virginia as well as fire incident data and statistics.

#### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Maintain and Enhance Operational Support Capacity

    ( Communicating fire information to stakeholders and the public helps to raise awareness of Virginia's fire problem.  Fighting fires with facts is mission critical.)

#### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 74402.R1.01**

    #### *Disseminate relevant, factual information related to fire and emergency services*

    **Measure Type:**  Output          **Measure Frequency:**  Quarterly

    **Measure Baseline:**  6173 website hits in May 2005

    **Measure Target:**  6790 website hits in May 2006

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**
    Information relating to fire is posted on our website and tracked via WebTrends reporting.  Also fire information is produced as part of publications and that dissemination is tracked via internal databases.

#### Objective 74402.R1 Has the Following Strategies:

- By producing an annual report highlighting fire trends and by restructuring the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) section of the website into 2 sections (data and logistics) will afford our customers a conduit for finding the information they need, whether statewide data or VFIRS information and logistics.  Finally, adding a VFIRS "snip-it" to every VDFP publication will aide in communicating fire information to our stakeholders and the public.

### Objective 74402.R2

#### *To continually identify and report on the current state and needs of Virginia's fire service*

It is critical to maintain the foundation laid by the 2004 Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment.  Yearly, less extensive, on-line questionnaires will allow benchmarking and identifying trends in resources, training, and staffing.

#### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Maintain and Enhance Operational Support Capacity

    ( Performing an on-going Needs Assessment of Virginia's Fire Service provides a plethora of information relating to needs and trends in Virginia's fire service.)

#### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 74402.R2.00**

    ***Needs Addressed***

    **Measure Type:** Outcome     **Measure Frequency:** Other

    **Measure Baseline:** Please see Virginia Fire Service Needs Assessment

    **Measure Target:** First calculation due in 2009.

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**

    Every 5 years a comprehensive needs assessment is completed. In this comprehensive assessment a statistical comparison of "needs" will be performed.

### Objective 74402.R2 Has the Following Strategies:

- Each year, on-line questionnaires will be launched to allow for benchmarking and identifying trends in resources, training, and staffing. These questionnaires will be launched in the fall of each year to ensure adequate time for analysis.

## Objective 74402.R3

### *Increase Access/Raise Awareness of the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS)*

Increasing access to VFIRS information (logistical and analytical) is of paramount importance in order to improve the quality of data received and reported. It is equally important to raise awareness of VFIRS and what it can do for every fire department.

### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Maintain and Enhance Operational Support Capacity

    ( Increasing access and raising awareness about the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System will increase the amount of reporting into the system, therefore making the data more complete and reflective of Virginia's fire problem.)

### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 74402.R3.01**

    ***VFIRS Participation Rate***

    **Measure Type:** Outcome     **Measure Frequency:** Annually

    **Measure Baseline:** 408 in 2004

    **Measure Target:** 599 (100% of fire departments in Virginia)

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**

    Every year VDFP will measure the number of departments reporting information into VFIRS and then compare it with the previous year. (# of fire departments reporting/#of fire departments in VA).

### Objective 74402.R3 Has the Following Strategies:

- Develop informational pages for our website to allow users to access important information that will help them use/manipulate VFIRS. Yearly articles highlighting VFIRS and its benefits will help raise awareness and participation by allowing people to see what VFIRS does for them.

## Objective 74402.R4

### *GIS Mapping for Fire Data*

GIS mapping for fire data is mission critical for enhancing our ability to see and report fire

problems/trends.

### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Maintain and Enhance Operational Support Capacity

    ( Implementing a GIS solution for fire data directly increases our ability to provide additional fire information and studies by providing a visual representation of fire problems/trends.)

### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 74402.R4.01**

    ***Fire Data Mapping Tool Use***

    **Measure Type:** Output          **Measure Frequency:** Every Six Months

    **Measure Baseline:** This solution is currently underdevelopment

    **Measure Target:** Once GIS solution is released we will aim for a 10 percent increase in use every six months.

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**
    As VDFP implements a GIS solution for fire data it will be posted as a resource on our webpage. We will track the number of uses using WebTrends tracking software.

### Objective 74402.R4 Has the Following Strategies:

- VDFP is an active member of the VGIN GIS Enterprise Working Group and will continue our participation.  Once our GIS solution has been created and implemented, we will market to our stakeholders through all of our publications.

## Objective 74402.R5

### Ad Hoc Studies of Fire Data

Being proactive in providing fire data, such as data from the Virginia Fire Incident Reporting System (VFIRS) is of paramount importance to illustrating and understanding Virginia's fire problem.

### This Objective Supports the Following Agency Goals:

- Maintain and Enhance Operational Support Capacity

    ( By completing ad hoc studies of fire data we will be able to provide the Commonwealth with a more complete picture of issues relating to "Fire In Virginia.")

### This Objective Has The Following Measure(s):

- **Measure 74402.R5.02**

    ***Ad Hoc Study Dissemination***

    **Measure Type:** Output          **Measure Frequency:** Annually

    **Measure Baseline:** 1200

    **Measure Target:** 1500

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**
    All ad hoc studies will be release via our website, therefore we will be able to track the number of hits/downloads via Web trends reporting software.  Some reports will also be released via print and we will track the number distributed via internal tracking system.

- **Measure 74402.R5.06**
  - ***Release of Ad Hoc Studies***

    **Measure Type:** Output        **Measure Frequency:** Annually

    **Measure Baseline:** 3

    **Measure Target:** 5

    **Measure Source and Calculation:**
    Every ad hoc study of fire data will be published via our website and limited print release. Each study will have a date of production and be grouped by year of release on our website.

### Objective 74402.R5 Has the Following Strategies:

- Being proactive in providing VFIRS data is of paramount importance. By expanding the number of users who access to the raw data and by forming "study groups" to identify potential areas of study, we can provide additional valuable information regarding the fire and emergency services.