



# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN



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# Introduction

The Rockford Fire Department (RFD) provides fire suppression, emergency medical services, basic and technical rescue, hazardous materials mitigation, 911 emergency communications, fire prevention, inspection and investigation, public education, domestic preparedness planning, and response to residents, businesses, and visitors within the city of Rockford. The RFD is consistently working to achieve and/or maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves, and thus contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to facilitate a method to document the agency's path into the future via a "Community-Driven Strategic Plan." The following strategic plan was written in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the CFAI *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual* 8<sup>th</sup> Ed., and is intended to guide the organization within established parameters set forth by the authority having jurisdiction.

The CPSE utilized the Community-Driven Strategic Planning process to go beyond just the development of a document. It challenged the membership of the RFD to critically examine paradigms, values, philosophies, beliefs and desires, and challenged individuals to work in the best interest of the "team." It further provided the membership with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the agency's external and internal stakeholders' groups demonstrated commitment to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion.

This strategic plan, with its foundation based in community and membership input, revisits the agency's pillars (Mission, Values, and Vision) and sets forth a continuous improvement plan that offers a road map for a justifiable and sustainable future.



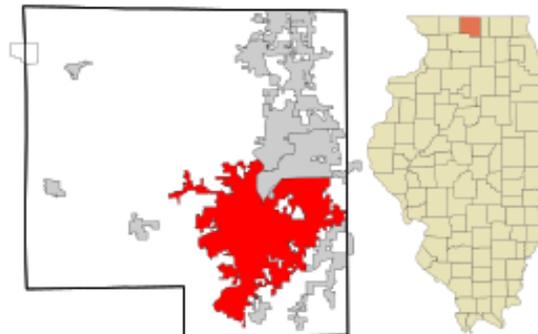
**ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT  
STRATEGIC PLAN  
Table of Contents**

Organizational Background.....	1
Organizational Structure .....	2
Definition of a Community-Driven Strategic Plan.....	3
Community Group Findings .....	7
Community Priorities .....	7
Community Expectations.....	8
Areas of Community Concern .....	12
Positive Community Feedback.....	22
Other Thoughts and Comments.....	31
Internal Stakeholder Group Findings .....	34
Mission.....	35
Values .....	36
Programs and Services .....	37
S.W.O.T. Analysis .....	38
Strengths .....	38
Weaknesses.....	39
Opportunities .....	40
Threats .....	41
Critical Issues and Service Gaps .....	42
Strategic Initiatives .....	42
Goals and Objectives.....	42
Vision.....	51
Performance Measurement.....	52
The Success of the Strategic Plan.....	53
Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, Initialisms.....	54
Works Cited .....	56



### Organizational Background

First settled between 1834 and 1835, Rockford, Illinois is strategically positioned halfway between Chicago and Galena. The community was briefly known as "Midway," but soon came to be "Rockford" as a result of the ford across Rock River. In 1837 the first post office was established. Two years later, the settlement was incorporated as a village and eventually chartered as a city in 1852.



Referred to as the Forest City, Rockford has numerous diverse venues of cultural and historical significance including the Coronado Theatre. The county seat of Winnebago County, Rockford is located in north central Illinois, 70 miles northwest of Chicago. With a population of over 150,000, it is the largest city in the area.

In 1855 the Rockford Fire Department was established as a volunteer organization,



**Millennium Fountain**

equipped with horse drawn apparatus. The first career members (six firefighters) were hired in 1881 and the department has grown since then to be the second largest in the state of Illinois, consisting of five divisions with 333 members providing administrative, emergency operations, training, emergency communications, and fire prevention services to a community of 64 square miles. Throughout its history, the

department has achieved a number of milestones representative of commitment to mission, as demonstrated by the 2011 accredited status from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, and sustained through the strategic plan process established in this document.



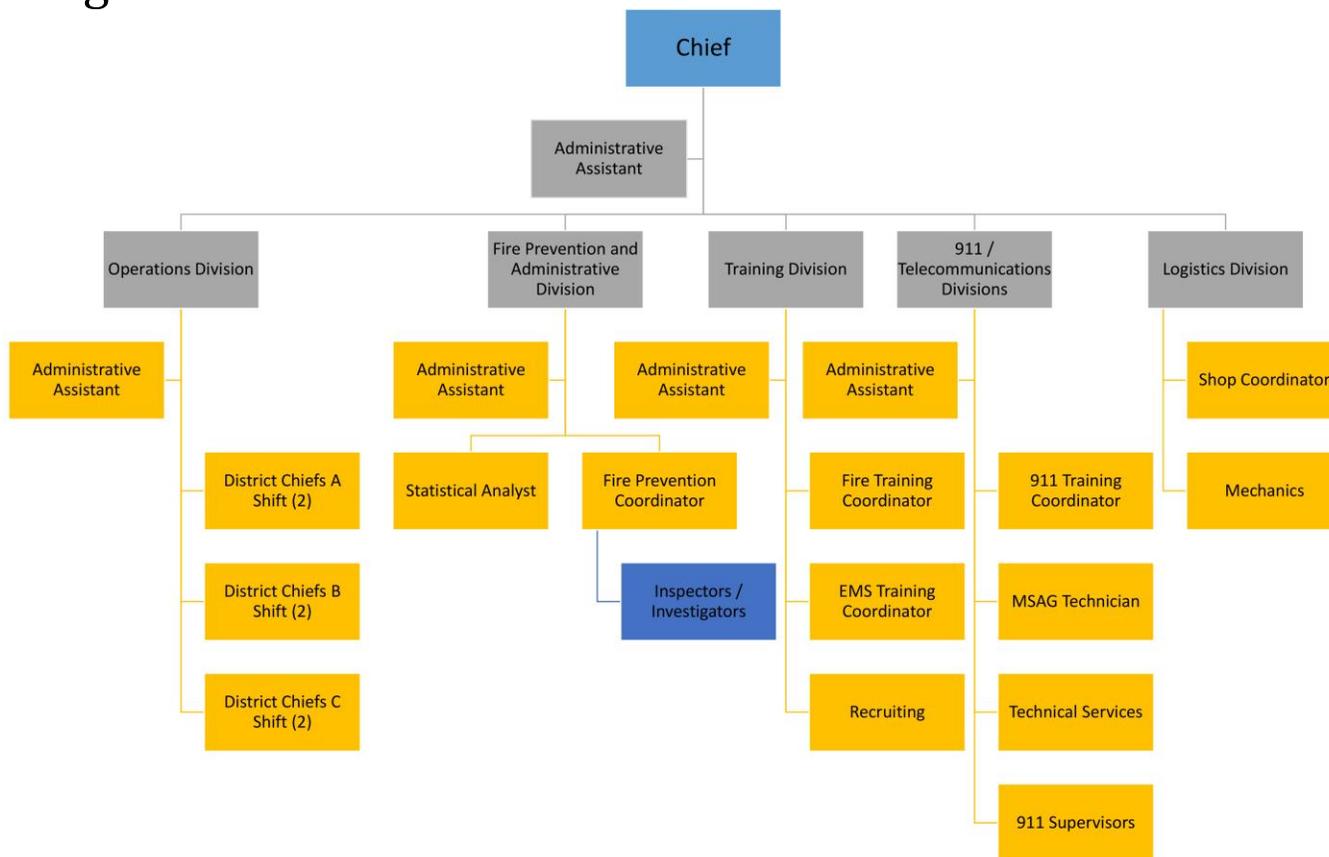


# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Organizational Structure





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Definition of a Community-Driven Strategic Plan

Public demands of the fire service continue to increase, while funding and other resources continue to shrink or remain stagnant. These trends place increased pressure on the modern fire service manager, policymakers, and staff to develop ways to be more effective and efficient. In many cases, the public is demanding the accomplishment of specific goals, objectives, and services with fewer or existing resources. To work more efficiently with available resources, organizations must establish their direction based on constructive efforts while eliminating programs that do not serve the community. In an effort to ensure that community needs were incorporated, the Community-Driven Strategic Planning process was used to develop this strategic plan. Businesses employ this type of process to identify market trends, allowing the service provider to focus resources while reducing risk and wasted effort.

#### What is a Strategic Plan?

It is a living management tool that:

- Provides short-term direction
- Builds a shared vision
- Sets goals and objectives
- Optimizes use of resources

*“What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow.”*

Peter F. Drucker,  
Professor of Social Science  
and Management

*Effective* strategic planning benefits from a consistent and cohesively structured process employed across all levels of the organization. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, it is the process of planning that is important, not the publication of the plan itself. The planning process should be flexible and dynamic, with new information from community members, like-providers, and life changes factored in appropriately.

Community-Driven Strategic Planning creates a platform for a wide range of beginnings. The approach comes to life by being shared, debated, and implemented in the context of organizational realities. Successful organizations, from government agencies to Fortune 500 companies, have recognized that attaining community focus is essential. Aware of this necessity, public safety agencies must strategically plan how they will deliver high-quality services to the public through better, more efficient and less expensive programs.

Once their strategic goals are established, agency leaders must establish performance measures, for which they are fully accountable, to assess and ensure that their departments and agencies are, indeed, delivering on the promises made in their strategic plans. Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer define strategic planning as

*a continuous and systematic process where the guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



The U.S. Federal Consortium Benchmarking Study Team goes on to explain that to fully understand strategic planning, it is necessary to look at a few key words in the strategic planning definition:

- **continuous** refers to the view that strategic planning must be an ongoing process, not merely an event to produce a plan;
- **systematic** recognizes that strategic planning must be a structured and deliberate effort, not something that happens on its own;
- **process** recognizes that one of the benefits of strategic planning is to undertake thinking strategically about the future and how to get there, which is much more than production of a document (e.g., a strategic plan);
- **guiding members** identifies not only senior unit executives, but also employees. (It also considers stakeholders and customers who may not make these decisions, but who affect the decisions being made.);
- **procedures and operations** means the full spectrum of actions and activities from aligning the organization behind clear long-term goals to putting in place organizational and personal incentives, allocating resources, and developing the workforce to achieve the desired outcomes; and
- **how success is to be measured** recognizes that strategic planning must use appropriate measures to determine if the organization has achieved success.

Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the management, employees, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

### Where Does the Community Fit into the Strategic Planning Process?

For many successful organizations, the voice of the community drives their operations and charts the course for their future. A "community-driven organization" is defined as one that *maintains a focus on the needs and expectations, both spoken and unspoken, of customers, both present and future, in the creation and/or improvement of the product or service provided.*<sup>2</sup>

Again, it will be useful to use the U.S. Federal Consortium Benchmarking Study Team's definitions of the specific terms used in the above definition:

- **focus** means that the organization actively seeks to examine its products, services, and processes through the eyes of the customer;
- **needs and expectations** means that customers' preferences and requirements, as well as their standards for performance, timeliness, and cost, are all input to the planning for the products and services of the organization;

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<sup>2</sup> Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- **spoken and unspoken** means that not only must the expressed needs and expectations of the customers be listened to, but also that information developed independently "about" customers and their preferences, standards, and industry will be used as input to the organizational planning; and
- **present and future** recognizes that customers drive planning and operations, both to serve current customers and those who will be customers in the future.

### Performance Assessment

Implied within every stage of the planning process is the ability to determine progress made toward the goals or targets set. This assessment ability is a monitoring function that simply tracks activities. It may be as simple as a "To Do List," or as complicated as a plan of action with milestones and performance measures. Also implied within the planning process is the ability to measure effectiveness of the actions taken in the conduct of the organization's business.

### The Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

The specific steps of the process are as follows:

1. Define the programs provided to the community.
2. Establish the community's service program priorities.
3. Establish the community's expectations of the organization.
4. Identify any concerns the community may have about the organization.
5. Identify the aspects of the organization that the community views positively.
6. Revisit the Mission Statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided, and which logically can be provided in the future.
7. Revisit the Values of the organization's membership.
8. Identify the Strengths of the organization.
9. Identify any Weaknesses of the organization.
10. Identify areas of Opportunity for the organization.
11. Identify potential Threats to the organization.
12. Identify the organization's critical issues.
13. Identify the organization's service gaps.
14. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
15. Establish realistic goals and objectives for each initiative.
16. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
17. Determine the Vision of the future.
18. Develop organizational and community commitment to accomplishing the plan.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Process and Acknowledgements

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) acknowledges and thanks the external and internal stakeholders of the Rockford Fire Department (RFD) for their participation and input into the Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process. The CPSE also recognizes Fire Chief Derek Bergsten and his team for their leadership and commitment to this process. Development of the RFD strategic plan took place in July 2015, beginning with a meeting hosted by representatives from the CPSE and RFD for members of the community (external stakeholders). Input received from the meeting revolved around community expectations, concerns, and other comments about the agency. Those present at this meeting were as follows:

**Rockford Fire Department External Stakeholders**

<i>Brad Adams</i>	<i>Cara Adams</i>	<i>Laurie Anderson</i>	<i>Tom Austin</i>	<i>Brad Barn</i>
<i>Jon Bates</i>	<i>Frank Beach</i>	<i>Tom Beck</i>	<i>Tom Bleed</i>	<i>Kenneth Board</i>
<i>Jennifer Bowman</i>	<i>Mike Broun</i>	<i>Karen Brown</i>	<i>Kimberly Bruce</i>	<i>Dave Byrnes</i>
<i>Brian Carbone</i>	<i>David "Buzz" Carlson</i>	<i>Gina Caronna</i>	<i>Dave Carter</i>	<i>Paula Carynski</i>
<i>Pena Castones</i>	<i>John Chadwick</i>	<i>Charo Chaney</i>	<i>Tom Chilton</i>	<i>Ron Clewer</i>
<i>Pam Connell</i>	<i>Kevin Countryman</i>	<i>Pat Curran</i>	<i>John Dempsey</i>	<i>John Dennis</i>
<i>Kelly Dinsmore</i>	<i>Pat Doherty</i>	<i>Luis Duran</i>	<i>Gordon Eggert</i>	<i>Carrie Eklund</i>
<i>Dan Engelkes</i>	<i>Rebecca Epperson</i>	<i>Robert Esmond</i>	<i>Jeff Fahrenwald</i>	<i>Sue Fuller</i>
<i>Don Gasparini</i>	<i>Jamie Getchius</i>	<i>Cristy Giacone</i>	<i>Bill Gissol</i>	<i>David Gomel</i>
<i>Bill Gorski</i>	<i>Laura Green</i>	<i>Gary Halbach</i>	<i>Jean Harezlak</i>	<i>Mike Hedrick</i>
<i>Teresa Hendrick</i>	<i>Teresa Hill</i>	<i>Chris Holm</i>	<i>Bobbie Holzwarth</i>	<i>Ken Irwin</i>
<i>Daniel Jarrott</i>	<i>Holly Juarez</i>	<i>Jim Keeling</i>	<i>Ann Thompson-Kelly</i>	<i>Emily Kielback</i>
<i>Becky Kendall</i>	<i>David Klintworth</i>	<i>Peggy Kruger</i>	<i>Lauren Kurlinkus</i>	<i>Lauren Lanber</i>
<i>Rebecca Landry</i>	<i>Randy Larson</i>	<i>Ron Leek</i>	<i>Britney Lindgren</i>	<i>LoRayne Logan</i>
<i>Paul Logli</i>	<i>Brad Long</i>	<i>Pam Maher</i>	<i>Maureen Mall</i>	<i>Leslie Mastroianni</i>
<i>John McNanery</i>	<i>Michele Mehren</i>	<i>Luke Miller</i>	<i>Lori Berkes-Nelson</i>	<i>Teena Newburg</i>
<i>Kari Nimmo</i>	<i>Ricardo Ocegueda</i>	<i>Anne O'Keefe</i>	<i>Patrick O'Keefe</i>	<i>J.M. Paris</i>
<i>Mike Paterson</i>	<i>Nancy Perry</i>	<i>Susan Radar</i>	<i>Matt Rioole</i>	<i>Kim Roush</i>
<i>Joan Sage</i>	<i>Mary Sargent</i>	<i>Robert Sargent</i>	<i>Susan Schreier</i>	<i>Kelly Shearer</i>
<i>Edgar Sida</i>	<i>David Sidney</i>	<i>Marsha Sisney</i>	<i>David Smith</i>	<i>Laura Speer</i>
<i>Ann Stites</i>	<i>Julia Valdez</i>	<i>Matt Vosberg</i>	<i>Dyanna Walker</i>	<i>Gary Walters</i>
<i>Maurice West II</i>	<i>Kelly Weston</i>	<i>Henrietta Dotson-Williams</i>	<i>Mark Williams</i>	<i>Eric Wilson</i>





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Community Group Findings

A key element of the agency’s organizational philosophy is having a high level of commitment to the community, as well as recognizing the importance of community satisfaction. Therefore, the agency invited community representatives to participate in a meeting focusing on the community’s needs and expectations of the agency. Discussion centered on the present service programs provided, and on priorities for the future.

#### Community Priorities

In order to dedicate time, energy, and resources to services most desired by its community, the RFD needs to understand what the customers consider to be their priorities. With that, the external stakeholders were asked to prioritize the programs offered by the agency through a process of direct comparison.

**Community Program Priorities of the Rockford Fire Department**

PROGRAMS	RANKING	SCORE
Emergency Medical Services	1	564
Fire Suppression	2	545
Rescue – Basic and Technical	3	526
Domestic Preparedness Planning an Response	4	330
Hazardous Material Mitigation	5	288
Fire Prevention	6	274
Fire Investigation	7	208
Public Fire / EMS Safety Education	8	205



**External Stakeholders Work Session**





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Community Expectations

Understanding what the community expects of its fire and emergency services organization is critically important to developing a long-range perspective. With this knowledge, internal emphasis may need to be changed or bolstered to fulfill the community needs. In certain areas, education on the level of service that is already available may be all that is needed. Following are the expectations of the community's external stakeholders:

#### **Community Expectations of the Rockford Fire Department (verbatim, in priority order)**

1. Prompt response / seconds count. Quick response to calls.
2. Prepared /well trained. To be educated and trained at all current levels.
3. Education in fire prevention. I expect the FD to invest in homeowner and public education that will prevent unnecessary fires and emergency situations. Emphasis on education / fire prevention / appropriate use of services.
4. To respond to all emergency situations in a professional manner. Conduct themselves in a professional and calm manner no matter how challenging or chaotic the circumstances. Professionalism.
5. Having the necessary equipment available quickly. Have equipment that is state-of-the-art and functional.
6. Safety minded. Safety first. Protect yourselves while you protect us. Safety of the public.
7. I expect the FD to regularly inspect public and high-traffic facilities to ensure they are adhering to policies and are prepared for crises/disasters. Strong code enforcement with a "second set of eyes" to ensure codes are being enforced.
8. Embrace the diverse community that is Rockford. To be reflective of the whole community in location and personnel. Diverse recruitment and hiring practices.
9. Be part of the community. Community involvement and outreach through local events and educational opportunities. Maintain strong community relations. The fire station should be a friendly neighbor.
10. Curious what is in place for natural disasters (recent tornadoes bring this to mind)? The department should have plans in place for disasters of all sizes and kinds.
11. I expect the FD to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars by using resources wisely, investing in quality personnel and equipment, and not creating wasteful systems or policies.
12. Equality of service in all areas of the city. Stations that are equally responsive. Stations that are equally equipped.
13. Alignment with regional departments - sharing of resources and expertise. Being able to cooperate with other community agencies if help is needed in an emergency situation.
14. Properly manned stations and covered. Maintain manpower at levels needed to "get the job done."
15. Quality first responder service. Continue quality A+ service of fire suppression and emergency services.
16. Have top-notch medical services. Be the best at EMS. The highest quality medics are RFD -





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- not from an ambulance company.
17. Execute the core missions (emergency response fire suppression, EMS, rescue) in an excellent manner.
  18. To keep up with the trends and new technology or products that may help with response time / putting out fire / EMS call. Currently technology and corresponding training.
  19. Effectiveness and efficiency of their services.
  20. Timely and skilled investigations. Learning from incidents and developing prevention. Have the best fire investigators.
  21. Strong/clear communication with area police and fire agencies. Communication with the community.
  22. Educate our youth, especially minorities, on the benefits of being a firefighter.
  23. Respond when we call. Respond to fires.
  24. Passion to be the best fire department in the world. Passion for what they do.
  25. Fire department personnel live within the city of Rockford boundaries. Be members of the community, preferably city residents.
  26. Effective leadership at the top and at the respective locations. Collaborative leadership that results in stability in the organization.
  27. Courtesy.
  28. Treat all community members with respect and dignity.
  29. Accessibility throughout the city.
  30. To suppress any type of fire.
  31. Compassionate response to people in crisis.
  32. Answer the phone when we call.
  33. Fire suppression is tied with emergency medical assistance because the fire department is the only department equipped to handle fires of all kinds. That is my #1 priority.
  34. Transparency. To continue to remain transparent with measurable RFD yearly data.
  35. Continue to support us during main hits (gas escaping events), explosions, etc.
  36. Competent service delivery.
  37. Provide services that will benefit the community you are trying to serve.
  38. To be positive about the community in which they live and serve.
  39. Be prepared for anything from minor medical issues to widespread natural disaster.
  40. Knowledgeable, skilled, and abilities of personnel and department.
  41. Hire employees that are proud of their services - attend regularly and are paid appropriately for this professional service and commitment.
  42. Maintain standards of performance that ensure high accreditation level.
  43. Provide the community with a 911 center that has the most current technology and effectively trained tele communicators.
  44. Complete the situation (e.g. put out fires, extricate a person, and take care of a chemical spill).





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



45. Nationally recognized collaboration with local and regional medical providers (emergency care).
46. We need access to information in a bilingual sources (Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, etc.).
47. Organized.
48. Determine what RFD strengths are today and make changes by considering outsourcing weaknesses.
49. Competent personnel.
50. Each individual is treated as if they are a family member of someone within the department.
51. There is adequate coverage for the service area.
52. Are there areas of rescue that other services could handle? For example, could DNR handle water rescues?
53. Ethical management of department resources.
54. I expect the FD to identify geographic or property areas of risk and develop a long-term plan to eliminate or mitigate those risks by working collaboratively with the city, county, and property owner.
55. Have measurements (public) that can let the community know you are performing.
56. Be open to change. Avoid them and us thinking.
57. Strategic planning with the budget allotted.
58. Participating in field studies of new medical treatments.
59. Being an asset to the community beyond what is expected.
60. Support and cooperation with municipal administration.
61. To address issues concerning non-emergency 911 calls. Work with other agencies or within the department to stop the "repeat" callers that do not have a true emergency.
62. We need a direct line of communication like Facebook, Twitter...where people can tell you about their needs.
63. Communicate to community RFD's strategic plan.
64. At least 2 years of college education - if not when hired, within a set period by contract.
65. Customer service.
66. All members are respectful and service-oriented in encounters with all users and community.
67. The department is run in a professional and organized way.
68. Respect for the taxpayer as evidenced by flexibility regarding staffing on ambulances, etc.
69. Determination of level of ambulance service needed.
70. To maintain high standards.
71. To provide perspective and a mature view of whatever situation they respond to.
72. To continue to be the model department of all the city's departments.
73. Visionary.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



74. Keeping abreast of innovations for management and service delivery.
75. Improve capital to better serve.
76. To set the standard for city services.
77. To have enough ambulances and fire trucks within seconds of the situation.
78. Accessibility to information regarding codes, etc. with feedback and onsite guidance.
79. Do the best you can, but understand you can't do it all.
80. Public wellness visits and wellness education in order to help decrease unnecessary call volume / hospital readmission.
81. Be good ambassadors of city government to constituents.
82. Firemen stories are the best...those would be an incentive to some to become firemen.
83. Integrate services with medical facilities for maximum use of resources.
84. Take a leadership role amongst local and regional public safety agencies.
85. Lower cost for delivery without compromising level of service.
86. Not responding with fire trucks when only an ambulance is needed.
87. Ability to give and receive constructive feedback and look at opportunities to improve on public safety issues.
88. To respond no matter what time of day and night.
89. To continue to be the envy of all Midwest fire departments by maintaining the cutting edge in fire and EMS practices.
90. Keep in mind the efforts of "Transform Rockford" as you do this strategic planning.
91. Caring.
92. Fair paid staff.
93. Feel appreciated.
94. Even distribution of departments and technology per geographic areas (zones).
95. Work to give back to the community in non-on-the-job ways.
96. Cost / value added service to community.
97. Progressive mindset - better solutions, training, prevention, etc.
98. Operates as a team.
99. Data generator / sharer of statistics on services and community conditions.
100. Continue improvement.
101. Union and city work together for benefit of both.
102. To respond unconditionally.
103. Fire department should provide "support" emergency medical services.
104. Reducing/eliminating duplication of services in the community to allow RFD to focus resources best.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Areas of Community Concern

The Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process would be incomplete without an expression from the community regarding concerns about the agency. Some areas of concern may in fact be a weakness within the delivery system, while some weaknesses may also be misperceptions based upon a lack of information or incorrect information.

#### **Areas of Community Concern about the Rockford Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)**

- Being from a small, rural town outside of Rockford, I honestly do not know much about the FD. This makes it difficult to evaluate. Perhaps the public education potentially lacking?
- How do we deal with the pension burden?
- Shouldn't part of this planning be with all of the regional players that own part of this?
- I am concerned that many firefighters don't contribute to the tax base that pays their salary, in fact, they live in areas that have volunteer firefighters. This sends a message that their services are not valuable.
- Concerned with community feedback.
- That all above (expectations) needs be provided at an efficient cost and best practices for tax payer dollars.
- Fire safety for children- once all suited up is scary for a child – your voice in the mask re deep and it is frightening.
- Response times.
- More info to community on everyday house/trash fires.
- Hope ample funding in place for all service initiatives.
- Concern for community if/when natural disasters take out power and cell phone service.
- Direct line of communications.
- Post of videos where you can see techniques or prevention methods.
- Not enough staff and equipment to meet emergency medical calls within the community.
- Not addressing the problem of too many non-emergency 911 calls.
- Pension system that is unsustainable.
- Aging equipment and facilities.
- Confusion over calls to city/county locations, when 911 is called.
- Early retirements.
- Pay and pensions too high.
- Are they getting the funding they need?
- Are the number of ambulances keeping up with the demand?
- Is it Rockford Fire or Rockford Car Accident Response?
- I sometimes hear a lot about and/or fights with city hall (less than the police however) rather than the positives about the department.
- We as a community know only a couple of the F.D. leaders – I'd like to see more out there to





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



know we have a succession plan.

- I don't know how we rank regionally or nationally in our responsiveness, if it is good, let's promote it.
- Union is not cooperative.
- Current staffing does not reflect the community – but this year's recruitment was better.
- Should consider becoming our taxing body.
- Need more ambulances of quick response vehicles.
- Need more public outreach / education.
- Fiscal responsibility – using resources in the most productive ways.
- Reflect racial and gender makeup of city.
- Worry about not expanding potential roles/job/duties (what more can the dept. do to help the city).
- Always look ahead – not be locked in to our old ways.
- Don't settle for “we have always done it this way” answers.
- Need to provide more leadership to firefighting efficiencies for entire region – help train volunteer departments.
- Not enough support on the southwest side of Rockford.
- Is hiring reflective of the community.
- Funding to maintain, update, or expand in geographic zones.
- Effect of RKFD – PD union relations in connection to governing commission and city of Rockford.
- Diversity in recruitment practices.
- Lack of priority medical dispatching.
- Crew fatigue on EMS side.
- Lack of staffing flexibility to match peak demand times.
- Minority recruitment.
- The number of firefighters that is needed.
- Are there stations were they should be?
- None number should be public.
- Let the public know when you are doing testing classes.
- Should public side some classes.
- Ability to respond to frequency of ambulance calls.
- Gap between city administration and department.
- Adequate number of stations / staff to accommodate the calls.
- There seems to be a large number of house fires in Rockford, possibly due to the age of the housing stock. How can RFD reach out to the community to encourage better safety habits and potentially reduce the number of house fires?





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Emergency medical services seem to outnumber responses to fires. Can the RFD take measures to be proactive in reducing the number of emergency responses, i.e. ambulance rides to the emergency room?
- Efficiency, are you using very expensive resources as efficiently as you can?
- Are connective resources, i.e., police, 911 dispatch all working the way they should?
- Does the union/management divide prevent efficiency and/or effectiveness?
- Do you have adequate capital and infrastructure?
- Does the FD utilize all resources available effectively like neighboring fire/EMS/police to develop the best action plan?
- Homelessness in Rockford and involving fires for heat which results in fires and sometimes death.
- River rescue operations, the river has been an area of concern for several years. Can we do better in river rescues?
- Citizens utilizing EMS as primary care which ties up vital resources for “real emergencies”.
- Maintain high professionalism for all their employees.
- A mayor that just doesn’t understand the power of a collaborative team approach.
- Manning.
- Equipment.
- Availability of funds for proper training.
- Health and safety of personnel.
- I don’t know if people (community) knows all that you do. You do way more than just respond to fires.
- Working relationship with other internal departments.
- Spreading yourself too thin. The number of vehicles sent to calls.
- Making sure we have properly located stations in all areas of the city.
- Having enough training for future problems – keeping the staff up to date.
- Large gap in the number of medical calls vs. fire calls.
- Concerns about “frequent callers” using the emergency system to get basic medical care.
- Department seems to be handcuffed by minimum manning rules.
- Lack of money.
- Department and city sometimes held hostage during contract negotiations.
- Adequate funding for current technology tools to assist them in performance of duties.
- Dedicated consistent funding for all staff to receive ongoing professional development training in all aspects of the job – technical, safety , cultural, personal interaction
- That the public doesn’t understand how the department operates on a day to day basis.
- That the department is sometimes portrayed ion the media in a negative light.
- That there are enough firefighters/paramedics on staff per our population.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Under supported by our governing body.
- No improvement in capital.
- Services do not reflect community's needs.
- Community is not improving because of provided services.
- Community outreach is not heard / visible.
- The RFD is not a reflection of community.
- Honestly I am not a city of Rockford resident so I do not pay into the system, however being the largest department in the region, I am wondering how often they collaborate with smaller rural districts for training, shared resources. It seems there could be benefits on both sides.
- I am concerned that some city codes – not necessarily just fire dept. related – are prohibitive to allowing residents to celebrate, participate in arts and recreation, etc. For instance, the permitting paperwork necessary. Just making sure we keep the neighborhoods strong. Impact of funding cuts
- Inappropriate use of fire services by people with limited knowledge and / or resources.
- Ensuring diversity / community representation.
- Age of equipment.
- Staffing flexibility / too few or too many.
- The need to resolve the pension crisis in a way that is fair to all sides / demands compromise by all parties.
- Need for greater cooperation /collaboration among all service providers, police, fire, county, and city.
- Need to find ways to maximize collaboration among funding entities.
- Need to improve relationships / trust with the communities served by the department.
- Need to educate the public concerning appropriate use of the EMS (especially ambulance).
- Making sure they fully understand the importance of their work.
- Need more prevention through education and inspections.
- Can non-firefighters be trained to do school/community education, RFD too valuable?
- Spending time inspecting cars from WI for fireworks (as seen on WIFR today) to prevent firework issues – someone else's problem.
- Is there a FEMA group to handle hazmat?
- Establishing preparedness models to ensure resources needed are available during tornado, etc. recovery.
- Pensions, retirement, etc. – making sure properly compensated without over taxing the people.
- The health of the relationship between the fire department and the city administration. (That goes for police and public works as well).
- Lack of knowledge the public has on how the fire department responds to emergencies.
- Manpower levels on engines – industry standard or contractual – best practices.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- There seems to be too much focus on Rockford and not enough on the region.
- Issues related to fires, education, emergency support, etc., need interagency cooperation- is the RFD the leader in this?
- Does the department learn from other communities and implement best practices.
- How do we keep costs down while improving services?
- Does the community understand all the department does?
- Are our firefighters working in a safe environment?
- Are our EMS responses as prompt as they could be?
- Do we have enough ambulances?
- Reduced manpower.
- Keep politics out of fire service decisions.
- Make sure they have the best education to ensure safety in every situation.
- It would be nice to see a Dalmatian at every fire house, to greet children and boost morale.
- Hiring process changed mid process – does not appear legal or transparent. Many involved frustrated! (Which reflects on how our citizens are treated by our community.)
- Why does an appointed commission direct the process for employee matters such as hiring? The trained professional with proper credentials should be, i.e. chief.
- The commission comprised of citizens has a valuable role to represent the community. I don't understand how hiring is one of them.
- Budget cuts which would risk lives or property.
- Older equipment becomes faulty.
- Fire department should not be primary emergency medical contact.
- Fire department should be more diverse race and gender.
- Fire workers should live in Rockford.
- FD should market their quarterly results.
- FD should not do ambulance services except when hospital ambulances are occupied.
- Penalties that now exist for alarm calls are excessive and we should allow for facilities to call off the response – this used to be possible.
- Excessive display of support on 911 health calls – don't see immediate need for second vehicle at all calls.
- Department visits for PR and to provide help in fire /emergency prevention are not regular or frequent enough – suggest annual visit to multi resident facilities and homes when needed to issue warnings and action expectations.
- I have not needed to use their services often so really do not have concerns that would be helpful. They have always been great to work with.
- Be sure education of department is foremost. Strength in the department shows strength in the community.
- I have concern for the first responder's safety – but don't have a solution.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Have the personnel been trained as to the behavioral health issues that may present when they answer a call – weather it is an ambulance call or fire call.
- I want to see the department continue to reflect the demographics of the community and who we are becoming based on trends.
- The occasional tensions of Department and City officials.
- That the tensions mentioned do not effect dept.
- Political football in the public (MINIMUM MANNING).
- Too many negative comments to the media (again, politics).
- Is there a plan for replacement / upgrading equipment?
- What is the long term plan for funding personnel and equipment?
- Is the pension system sustainable? If not, then what?
- Safety of FF personnel i.e., adequate equipment training, number of persons/truck etc.
- Undue pressure on fire department due to violence and drug abuse in community.
- Lack of resources for equipment and staff.
- Cost – our city’s budget is highly challenged. We need to be both excellent and cost effective with ion our fire department.
- Labor issues – I am concerned that the contractual issues could impact the long term success of our department.
- Retention – on both the union and management side, I am extremely pleased with our leadership team I want to maintain the right work environment to retain them.
- Possibility that there may be undue influence by powerful individuals / organizations that are not in the best interest of the community.
- Stagnation on ideas to improve or do the work differently.
- Change management processes.
- Response time can always seek improvement.
- Fire education needs to be continue past school aged kids.
- Sufficient personnel per shift.
- Equipment maintenance.
- Funding for equipment purchases.
- Using fire rigs for first aid coverage.
- Age of stations and need to update each.
- Need the retirement age increased.
- Union and city work together for benefit of both.
- Do they have enough firefighters on duty?
- Do they have good working equipment?
- Is their fire station up to code?
- Financial – personnel, pension, equipment costs.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Relationship between union and administration.
- Just a guess, but I would assume they may have limited resources which may cause challenges.
- Response times in high density areas.
- Financial obligations to tax payers –i.e., working with city leaders when times are tough.
- Hope the level of service can be maintained given Rockford’s economic climate.
- Would additional ambulance(s) and EMS personnel be appropriate?
- Concerned that they are not involved enough with the community and educating them.
- Staffing.
- Community safety.
- Why are there no minorities in the admin office?
- Who hires for 911? How many are minorities?
- Overstaffing on ambulance call.
- When ambulance is called use second vehicle that is not fire truck.
- Cut time off of calls.
- Let community know when to contact 911 vs. non-emergency.
- Work with taking citizens to options other than ER when possible.
- Cooperation with city, we should be “one family”.
- Look for more efficient way to provide service.
- More cross training.
- Budget constraints.
- Politics getting in the way of services (not the dept.’s fault).
- Continue to communicate during gas escaping events.
- Budget – is it adequate.
- Union issues – pensions are a strain on taxpayers.
- Recruitment - is it hard to find good candidates.
- Training – are there any holes / gaps in training due to budget or other priorities getting the way.
- Equipment - are there any gaps in equipment due to budget or competing priorities.
- Acrimony with city hall.
- Rigidity related to code when at odds with common sense – I cannot get the battle out of my heads related to required sprinklers for the YMCA swimming pool in a renovation 20 years or so ago (may be an old wives tale, but is an example).
- Financial concern – staffing and pensions.
- Response times
- Attitude and professionalism with some staff.
- That financial constraints will have a negative impact on equipment purchase and training.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Staffing – diversifying the workforce to represent the diversity of the community.
- That politics will hamper forward progress by the department.
- Proper staffing – neither too many nor too few.
- Good working relationship between admin and union.
- Sufficiency of stations and equipment.
- Be able to function without interference from political considerations.
- Prioritize financial resources not based on some artificial criteria (quotas).
- No public education or evacuation plan or emergency preparedness in case of mass emergency/terrorist attack.
- Lack of personnel.
- Lack of bi-lingual / bi-cultural personnel.
- Use of down time on each shift.
- Lack of available ambulances and crews for transports to hospital.
- Efficiency – making sure as best as possible that proper response is made based on the emergency.
- In my place of business – when a call is made for a simple fall or twisted ankle – we get an ambulance and a truck, seems like expensive overkill – it must cost a lot of dollars to send that truck.
- There is not enough diversity within the department – race as well as gender.
- There are some community members that feel as if calls on the west side of town are responded to a slower rate than other sides of town.
- There are also some community members concerned that they are not treated with respect based on their ethnicity or socio-economic status.
- Few – limited knowledge but believe it is an excellent department with good leadership and employees.
- Do wish/hope that the department will grow and develop its leaders in a deliberate manner.
- As a community leader I do not feel there is a close partnership or understanding of our fire department. As far as I'm concerned just dial 911, otherwise no interaction.
- I believe all interactions with any employee at the fire department should be that of service, guidance, and help, that has not always been the case.
- I am new in last 5 years – seems as though union is equal to politicians. Does the department really provide a service or a response? In the end I think it is an improvement in both.
- Community involvement in addition to emergency response.
- Costs – true or not, a perception that staffing could be decreased without compromising its services.
- Many of our firefighters chose to live in communities that have volunteer fire departments. If their services are beneficial to me and my family, which I believe they are, why do they not live in communities that have these services?





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Lack of ability to attract applicants to the fire department that reflect our diverse community.
- As the footprint of Rockford's geography grows could we be over stretching department resources.
- The volume of EMS runs has been a significant issue and as a community we need to continually be creative to address this situation.
- The safety of our force should always have high priority.
- Budget – city leaders must provide the fire department adequate funding to do the job.
- Training – fire department personnel must have proper training to do the job.
- Tools – the fire department must have the necessary equipment to do the job.
- Process improvement – solid processes and procedures are necessary to define job functions and how to perform them.
- Safety – the fire department personnel should have necessary equipment/processes to insure they do not get hurt performing their jobs.
- Ensuring new recruits meet high standards.
- Keeping buildings and equipment up to date in an increasingly fiscally challenged state and city.
- Maintain readiness with labor costs that make staffing a challenge.
- Ability to fully staff stations.
- Ability to fully equip stations.
- Airport not being under jurisdiction and coverage.
- Ability to fund pensions and legacy costs.
- Controlling costs.
- Adequate coverage (medical).
- City/department relations.
- Union/management (officers) relations.
- Diversity in hiring.
- Frontline firefighter fitness.
- Does the department have adequate financial resources to meet public expectations?
- Does the public know when and where fire safety training is available or what the emergency response plan is?
- Public does not know how they spend their day when not responding to a fire, accident, or health issue.
- They should live in the city they serve.
- No need to take city vehicles home.
- Occasional negative political issues.
- Ability to continue to have high quality performance in a very dysfunctional political (city) environment.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Operating with depleted resources.
- Effective use of personnel – especially in administrative capacities.
- Continuing commitment to assisting Rockford public schools.
- Duplication of services with EMS/ambulance responders.
- There is no cost reduction strategies listed as a priority.
- Bad public impression related to union and mayor. Appearance that the union is unwilling to collaborate.
- Rockford economy needs collaborative models for financial sustainability.
- Not enough resources to accomplish services 1-8.
- The number of vehicles required to respond to a call seems like a waste of resources in some cases – but I’m not sure – what drives how many go out?
- Cost to maintain the level of suppression services we currently provide.
- Continued demand for emergency medical services as primary form of care.
- Ability of the fire service generally to adapt to challenging service demands.
- Cost of emergency medical service to residents.
- Improve response times.
- Current staffing is too low. Staff constantly in the 24 hour shift which causes mistakes, and system breakdowns.
- Health of staff too many times fire personnel leave the agency due to medical issues,
- Fire staff run too many non-emergency calls.
- Cost of the department to the taxpayers.
- Responsible use of tax money.
- Having enough firefighters.
- Have good relations with partners.
- Not having enough firefighters/paramedics in a vehicle on a call.
- The pay they receive – I have known many firefighters that have gotten a 2<sup>nd</sup> job to make ends meet. That should not happen to people who put their lives on the line every day.



External Stakeholders Work Session





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Positive Community Feedback

The CPSE promotes the belief that, for a strategic plan to be valid, the community's view on the agency's strengths must be established. Needless efforts are often put forth in over-developing areas that are already successful. However, proper utilization and promotion of the strengths may often help the organization overcome or offset some of the identified weaknesses.

#### **Positive Community Comments about the Rockford Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)**

- I appreciate the quality of services provided by the department.
- The personnel appear to be well trained.
- Great presence in the public – very professional.
- Community involved management team.
- Chief is high visibility with high credibility.
- Never hear negative comments within the city, unlike the police department.
- Firefighters always seem friendly and service-oriented.
- I honestly have no heard much negative – it seems the FD typically stays out of political battles. Huge plus!
- Asking for feedback.
- Wanting to include the community.
- In all situations that I have encountered the fire department – it has been positive.
- I am proud of our department and that they represent our city.
- Always professional in community situations.
- Firefighters have remained professional and fulfilled job responsibilities well despite the contentious political environment.
- They show up to help above all else – not concerned with assigning blame or making excuses – just focused on what can be done to help the situation.
- “Locally grown” department administrators who have a vested interest in our community.
- Very active in community events.
- Department is easy to work with when organizing events.
- Administrators who are interested in community input.
- Dedicated and hard-working firefighters.
- Neighbors have had all positive comments regarding response times and quality.
- You are everywhere and never say NO to helping with booths or community events.
- Very friendly – have never met anyone who doesn't have a huge heart.
- Lots of manpower and lots of tools (especially for kids and fire prevention).
- Partnership power – you are always ready to partner and try new things.
- Professionalism.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Positive customer service.
- Knowledgeable and skilled.
- Response to emergencies.
- Services provided that are innovative and productive.
- A department that values individuals and represents collegial relationships.
- A department that strives to be a team and a team that public perception is one and positive.
- A department that has a powerful leader – actually leaders – and is available to the public – they are visually seen and appropriately attend public events.
- A department that speaks highly of employees.
- A department that has a vision for the future and takes positive action to address such – e.g. new fire station – new trucks – etc.
- A department that has done well in spite of mayoral mistrust and lack of a desired team for the entire city.
- Very responsive with codes inquiries for businesses.
- FD employees are accessible.
- Very professional.
- Well-maintained equipment.
- RFD generally perceived as trustworthy.
- General perception of professionalism.
- Assets appear to be well maintained.
- We are very fortunate to have such a professional, strong fire department in Rockford.
- The RFD has always been cooperative and supportive of my business.
- I think the implementation of the mobile integrated healthcare program is definitely a step in the right direction to improve overall wellness, decrease call volume, and in turn decrease readmission and overall healthcare costs.
- Great response time to both EMS and fire/rescue calls.
- Ethical in terms of performance.
- Kudos for building a state-of-the-art building off of S. Main Street!
- Respectable chief of the department. Glad leadership has integrity.
- Strong leadership based in good values including community-services orientation.
- Commitment to quality and being progressive.
- No obvious strife between union and leadership.
- You're doing a good job.
- We like your new firehouse.
- Job well done!
- I like this class.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- It is one of the best in the USA.
- The men and women are well trained.
- Outstanding customer service.
- Nice to see new equipment – vehicles.
- Professional leadership.
- RFD has a strong reputation of ethical departments (little controversy).
- Wonderful experience with EMT staff (several times).
- Excellent outreach at community events and neighborhood meetings.
- Very professional leadership.
- Media friendly – gets the word out well.
- Inspires confidence of the community.
- Firefighters are always professional!
- Great recruitment efforts this year!
- Plan well for the future.
- Station 3 was well thought out.
- Leadership team is strong.
- The chief and his leadership is very open to discussions and opportunities, easy to approach and not defensive.
- While noted, I'd like to see the FD more involved in the community – I do see they already are involved somewhat and appreciate that.
- There is less turmoil between the FD and City Hall than there used to be and I like where it is going.
- Well respected by employees.
- You don't hear negative news about them.
- Do not hear much complaining about workloads, etc.
- Good community perception – well-liked by community members.
- Good leadership.
- Fine reputation.
- Caring spirit for those they serve.
- Staff are very professional and friendly whenever I have encountered them.
- Responsive to all calls to our building.
- Lead officials with the department have positive, public presence and demonstrate openings to address community needs.
- Public forums.
- Demonstrations with equipment.
- Prepared.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Preemptive.
- Kind / friendly.
- Professional.
- Training for fire personnel.
- Health and safety of others over self.
- Selflessness.
- Of all municipal departments, the fire department is so professional, trained, staffed, and equipped. All top quality. This forum shows they understand what the needs of the community are. Thank you.
- Response time.
- Medical services with staff.
- Training.
- Knowledgeable in safety and prevention.
- Quick response to emergencies.
- Staff is a pleasure to work with.
- Quality service.
- Positive presence in the community.
- Equipment, apparatus, and facilities have improved.
- Well-trained firefighters.
- Great, young leadership is in place to move the department forward.
- Open to community input.
- Great emergency action plan in place.
- Took time and effort to become and stay accredited.
- Limited interactions but they are respectful and positive and caring.
- Focus on having a diverse workforce.
- High standards and expectations of the staff.
- Visible in the community as an organization committed to our citizens on every level.
- Kind, caring, professional.
- They go out of their way to make people facing very stressful times feel comfortable and safe.
- Excellent department.
- Very professional team.
- Everyone I have encountered has had great personalities.
- Always look professional.
- Willingness to communicate with the public.
- Teaching fire safety to children – very important.
- Great training center.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Personnel and administration working together as a team.
- Stations are a real partner with their neighborhoods.
- Very professional organization.
- Have always responded in a timely manner on medical calls.
- Personnel are very professional on medical calls.
- With the addition of the new fire station, response times seem to have shortened.
- Communication has improved – openness to respond to problems or processes for improvement.
- I believe that the chief and his staff do an excellent job of keeping the community “in the loop” on items that we need to be more aware of.
- Recruiting programs are thorough, expedient, and professional.
- Emergency response preparedness – we practice and are ready to combat large-scale disasters.
- Accreditation – a fantastic accomplishment.
- Our chief – a true leader.
- All of our people – they are friendly, professional, and are fantastic public servants.
- The RFD is led by a chief who is able to view the department from a 5-foot view and a 50,000-foot view. He leads the second largest department in the state and does it with ease. He makes time for community involvement and shows true leadership in this community.
- Excellent division chiefs – couldn’t find better.
- The RFD is the most well received public service municipality in Rockford.
- RFD is progressive beyond most FDs.
- Outstanding leadership.
- Patient and humane while performing their duties.
- Rapid response time.
- Professional and competent.
- Generally, the reputation of the department is good.
- Responses to emergencies seems quick and competent.
- Personnel seem like good representatives to the community.
- Equipment appears well maintained.
- Press seems generally positive.
- Always have experienced professionalism with all department members.
- Very impressed with the level of training.
- Very little, if any, controversy in the public (positive).
- I think you do a great job engaging families in the community through events and education.
- Visibility of the chief in the community.
- Recent award of a scholarship to RAMM to benefit minority recruitment.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Through personal interactions and interactions with my children for school learning, everyone at/on the department is friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful in educating the groups they are with.
- Always hear positive feedback on response times and timely assistance, when needed.
- Have felt the department personnel are very professional and courteous when they respond.
- Their equipment is kept up – looks good.
- Appreciate efforts by the fire administration to get community feedback.
- The fire department does an excellent job in responses.
- The fire department does an excellent job in response time.
- The fire department has excellent training.
- The fire department has excellent firefighters.
- The fire department has outstanding morale and job stability.
- Staff is enjoyable to work with.
- Involved with kid programs and the community.
- Response times seem to be good.
- Positive contributions to community events.
- Friendly, caring staff.
- Appears competent and knowledgeable.
- Any fire person I've dealt with has always been kind and engaging. A+!
- The events put on by the department have been family-friendly and all inclusive.
- Seeing the department on scenes, they all appear focused and professional while keeping people safe.
- Best fire ground operations now in the history of the RFD.
- Excellent fire prevention and code enforcement.
- Excellent training – recruit and continuing.
- The fact that the fire department hosted this public session speaks very highly of the chief's commitment to the community.
- Easy to work with from a business perspective.
- Staff is professional and well trained.
- Response time is good for some areas of the community.
- Excellent interactive customer service.
- Education and fire prevention (smoke detectors – provide and install).
- Proactive implementation – diversity in hiring, opportunity for advancement.
- Leadership.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Education – school system (academies) – safety education.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Public service announcements.
- Integrated in the community.
- I haven't used or needed much from the RFD, but the reputation is good.
- Continue to focus on strengths – can't be everything to everyone.
- Community involvement with educational outreach at neighborhood/community events.
- Visibility in the community – as an organization that serves the public.
- Well-trained / educated department.
- Firefighters are very approachable.
- Community activism is nice to see.
- Grateful for their hard work and tireless efforts no matter the situation, weather or difficult conditions.
- Thanks for working with us as a team during natural gas issues.
- Thanks for working together on fire operations training with natural gas.
- Well-respected!
- Works well with the community as a whole.
- Open to feedback.
- Does a great job with available resources.
- Good reputation – thank you.
- Well-trained and skilled.
- Gentle in care in the needs of crisis.
- Good role models for our young men.
- Adequately staffed in ranks.
- Professionalism of paramedics at our facility.
- Usually quick response.
- Training in fire prevention in schools.
- Well-disbursed in the community.
- Professional / friendly – as experienced with the neighborly relationship at the rural station with Our Savior's Lutheran Church and Maude Johnson School.
- Fire department always seems to be a positive partner in educational events, particularly with children.
- Engaged as good community members, i.e. Transform Rockford.
- Excellent record of service and no scandals.
- Excellent chief.
- Good distribution of stations.
- During a recent call to my business, the department was quick to respond. No fire – just a little smoke from an electrical box, but they were very thorough and courteous. I felt safe.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- 911 center is a vital link to the community and coordination of many services.
- There appears to be an experienced staff who understands their objectives and jobs.
- Leadership is seeking input and methods to enhance service.
- Department / community interaction is strong.
- Professional attitude toward their trade.
- Well-educated employees.
- Strong family values.
- Care about the value of the service they provide.
- Professional leadership within the community.
- Good at transparency and Rockford stats.
- Businesses generally have favorable impression of the department.
- Developers have generally had favorable impressions.
- Great leadership.
- Professional behavior.
- Quick response times.
- Skilled FD staff.
- Trusted to “be there” when needed, ASAP.
- The chief is a great leader and it is evident in the quality of the men and women in the department.
- The department has demonstrated an openness to community collaboration and partnerships.
- A positive as evidenced by the absence of negatives – I have not heard anyone in the community “complain” about the department or its service.
- I appreciate the commitment the department members have to their job and community.
- The community service work many department members take part in.
- Kudos for getting the community involved with this project.
- Good response times.
- Good presence in the community.
- Keep up with the inspections.
- Good education.
- Highly-trained staff.
- Good community partners.
- Good visibility in the community.
- Once at a fire, good response in putting the fire out.
- Pride and level of service provided by members of the department. Amazing quality.
- Strong leadership, visible, trusted, open with staff and the community.
- Active in the community.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Response times.
- The chief's leadership.
- Public image is positive.
- Very professional.
- Staff is well trained and ready for action.
- Response times to fires are good.
- Connection with survivors.
- Officers are professional and respectful.
- Excellent leadership.
- Dedicated, talented and professional workforce.
- Committed professionals.
- I feel safe knowing we have a state-of-the-art fire department that can respond to any emergency we may have with a trained workforce. Thank you for your service.
- The firefighters that I have interacted with have been professional and courteous.
- The leadership is positive and strong.
- The RFD seems to be very well equipped at this time – I was impressed – with the unit to blow smoke out of a building.
- I owe my existence to the response of the paramedics. The community needs to be more aware of the survivor statistics achieved in Rockford.
- I hear of little issues and the chief is always polite and a standup guy.
- Appears to be working.
- Not the subject of bad departments.
- EMS may be a lower ranking “priority” in the matrix, but I believe it is a great “fit” for any fire department. As such, services provided need to continue to be the highest quality.
- The department, overall, functions in a very organized manner.
- There are very few casualties that are the “fault” of the department.
- In my experience, response time is superb!
- There seems to be great union/administration relations within the fire department. Different than the PD.
- Any interaction has been courteous and professional.
- I value the force's involvement in city life.
- There seems to be a strong pride and sense of loyalty on the part of our firefighters – starting from the top!
- Appreciate high level of courtesy and compassion.
- Administration is progressive and professional.
- Good quality of emergency response.
- Engagement in the community through special initiatives and projects/memberships.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Collaboration with other emergency responders through Northern Illinois.
- Low percentage of death and injury due to fire.
- Usually timely response.
- Approachable senior staff.
- Good specialized response units.
- Excellence community outreach.



External Stakeholders Work Session

### Other Thoughts and Comments

The Community was asked to share any other comments they had about RFD or its services. The following written comments were received:

#### **Other Community Comments about the Rockford Fire Department (verbatim, in no particular order)**

- Keep up the good work! Thanks for running into burning buildings for us! 😊
- Thank you for inviting the public! It will be interesting to see the outcome!
- Great step forward.
- Firefighters need to recognize the incredibly important role they play in the community. They are models that reflect how the community treats each other.
- I have thankfully not needed the fire department, but I have not heard any complaints from my friends and neighbors.
- Thank you so much for your attention to detail. When you responded to an incident at my mother's, someone noticed the smoke detector was old and not working. Your staff replaced it with a brand new smoke detector. Very nice touch and very helpful!! Thank you!!
- Extremely happy with the services provided by the Rockford Fire Department.
- This was a good idea! I hope our police department considers doing the same thing.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Great experience. Thank you for asking us!
- Very proud to have Rockford Fire Department serving our city.
- I have enough faith in the department to believe through proper management, that 3-man truck crews would work well. There is a need to make every dollar count when dealing with a shrinking tax base.
- Nice to be included as a stakeholder!
- I believe the fire department does a great job, very reliable, good response time, and well prepared. Congrats.
- As a new business, we have been very encouraged to see the RFD simply stop by and introduce themselves and initiate the discussion for future needs / potential rescue. Also, a request for an inspection was followed up very timely. Thank you!!
- Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Possibly share the services grid prior to the luncheon. Could have thought more collectively on the topics.
- Thank you for all you do – your commitment, time away from your own families, putting your life above others, staying calm, wonderful people / hearts you have!
- Very professional organization; have stayed (or appears) to have avoided the politics via the media.
- Asset to the community, enhances the quality of life.
- This process was a very good idea!
- Appreciate the opportunity to participate in the strategic planning process!
- Wish labor better understood management’s position regarding funding, scheduling, hiring, etc.
- Great fire department overall.
- Thank you for protecting our community.
- Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback.
- I have the opportunity to interact with the RFD on a professional basis serving those with behavioral health conditions. So impressed with D. Bergsten and B. Vertiz and all of the personnel – patient, gentle, compassionate. Thank you!
- The only real problem seems to be political. There is obviously an issue between the major and the department/union. Keep the fight out of the paper/media. The public may feel that they are losers.
- I have always found the RFD to have incredible standards and pride in their jobs. I would consider them at the top of their game always. A credit to the department and the city. I feel the chief has been a great asset to the department.
- Thanks for utilizing this style of strategic planning!
- Great job including the community for feedback.
- Overall, I’m pleased with my experiences. Keep up the good work!
- How do we deal with the pension burden?





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



- Good luck! Strategic planning takes work.
- The department is well led. It is important that morale stays high to ensure the team always does the best job possible.
- I think there is an opportunity to increase your communication with the public in what you are doing (i.e. new stations, new equipment, accreditation awards, incidents of fire and medical calls this year versus last, new trainings, new tactics, etc.).
- Thanks for allowing us to share our thoughts.
- The exception to disbursements is questioning of need on the far east side closer to 90.
- Appreciate what RFD does for us.
- Appreciate the work involved in service improvement through this effort.
- Need more minority hires – consider more one-on-one in high school (juniors and seniors); recruit at the college level – i.e. university, RVC, NIU, Highland Community College, etc.
- Need more communications/presentations to city council about their day-to-day work – I understand they report high grass, dilapidated homes, etc. we need to know how they collaborate with our other departments.
- Great idea to have this session.
- Has any consideration been given to merging local departments into one “metro” department?
- We need to evaluate our pension obligations in the future and derive a fair balance between compensating our fire department team and the taxpayers.
- I have many friends on the job. Most have a great passion for the job, family, and community.
- Keep up the excellent work.
- I believe we should continue such creative and collaborative programming such as the community EMS initiative.
- Fortunately, I have not had to use the services of our fire department so I cannot personal evaluate the services, but overall I have a positive impression of our FD.
- The department needs to demonstrate their value to our community to prevent people from leaving the city for lower taxes.
- Keep up the good job.
- Thanks for a job well done!!
- Keep up the good work.
- Continued collaboration regarding “frequent flyers” – how can the community help with this?
- Thank you for allowing us to provide input.
- Great effort today! Well done.
- Thanks for asking ☺
- I believe Rockford has a very good fire department!
- The Rockford Fire Department has a stellar reputation throughout Northern Illinois.
- I have lived in Rockford for my whole life and in general, have always had a positive experience when dealing with the Rockford Fire Department.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Internal Stakeholder Group Findings

The internal stakeholder work sessions were conducted over the course of three days. These sessions served to discuss the agency’s approach to Community-Driven Strategic Planning, with focus on the RFD’s Mission, Values, Core Programs and Support Services, as well as the agency's perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The work sessions involved participation by the broad agency representation in attendance, as named below and pictured on the next page.

**Internal Stakeholder Representatives of Rockford Fire Department**

Charles Barnes <i>District Chief</i>	Derek Bergsten <i>Fire Chief</i>	Andy Bolhous <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>	Timothy Brown <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>
James Cantu <i>Firefighter/PM</i>	Anita Cardenas <i>Senior Clerk</i>	Brian Carlson <i>Lieutenant/Fire Training Coordinator</i>	Joe Corl <i>Division Chief</i>
Miguel DeLarosa <i>Firefighter/EMT</i>	John Dempsey <i>Captain</i>	Brian Drerup <i>Division Chief</i>	John Girone <i>911 Shift Supervisor</i>
John Hall <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>	Travis Hawkins <i>Firefighter/EMT</i>	Jeff Kloweit <i>Recruiter</i>	Matt Knott <i>Division Chief</i>
Todd Monahan <i>Lieutenant</i>	Dave Nordenberg <i>Lieutenant</i>	Erica Todd <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>	Michele Pankow <i>Captain</i>
Steve Preiss <i>District Chief</i>	Tracy Renfro <i>District Chief</i>	Matt Renfro <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>	Jim Rife <i>District Chief</i>
Elizabeth Russell <i>Statistical Analyst</i>	Michael Schnaper <i>Inspector</i>	Marty Schoonover <i>Lieutenant</i>	Wayne Schoville <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>
Chris Scrol <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>	Sandy Stansell <i>911 Division Administrator</i>	Leigh Sterrenberg <i>911 Training Supervisor</i>	Rebecca Tyo <i>Firefighter/Paramedic</i>
Bob Vertiz <i>Lieutenant/EMS Training Coordinator</i>	Ernest White <i>Lieutenant</i>	Judi Yehling <i>Sr. Administrative Assistant</i>	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



Internal Stakeholders Group (Credit: Ryan Davis)

## Mission

The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?
- For whom?

The consensus of the RFD's internal stakeholders was to maintain the existing mission (established in 2014).

### Mission of the Rockford Fire Department

**The mission of the Rockford Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of our community through fire, emergency medical, and life safety services.**





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality of the organization. RFD's internal stakeholders agreed to maintain the following values.

#### Values of the Rockford Fire Department

**Professionalism**  
**Respect**  
**Integrity**  
**Dedication**  
**Empathy**

The Mission and Values are the foundation of this agency. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the agency are guided by them in the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.



Internal Stakeholders Work Session





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Programs and Services

The RFD internal stakeholders identified the following core programs provided to the community, as well as the services that enable the agency to deliver those programs:

#### Core Programs of the Rockford Fire Department

- Emergency Medical Services
- Fire Suppression
- Rescue – Basic and Technical
- Domestic Preparedness Planning and Response
- Hazardous Materials Mitigation
- Fire Prevention
- Fire Investigation
- Public Fire/EMS Safety Education
- 911 Center

#### Supporting Services of the Rockford Fire Department

- Shop
- IT
- Training
- Hospitals
- City departments
- IEMA
- FEMA
- NENA
- Vendors
- MABAS
- Red cross
- Office of the State Marshal
- Winnebago County Health
- Rockford Public Schools
- Explorer Program
- APCO
- Rock Valley College
- IFSI
- ISO
- CPSE
- Illinois Commerce Commission
- Law enforcement
- City administration
- Media
- Salvation Army
- Rosecrance
- Region 3 – communications
- Northern Illinois Next Generation Alliance
- Coroner's Office
- Illinois Department of Public Health
- Chaplain's Division
- Illinois EPA
- EAP
- Federal agencies
- Utility companies
- AT&T Language Line
- Recruiter
- Local 413 IAFF
- Rockford Housing Authority
- Railroads
- Center for Sight and Hearing Impaired





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### S.W.O.T. Analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is designed to have an agency candidly identify its positive and less-than-desirable attributes. Internal stakeholders participated in this activity to record their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats.

#### Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths in order to assure that it is capable of providing the services requested by the community and to ensure that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the primary function of the organization, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds. Through a consensus process, the internal stakeholders identified the strengths of the RFD as follows:

#### **Strengths of the Rockford Fire Department**

Employees	Morale	Talent
Public image	Customer service	Fire prevention
Fire suppression / tactics	Professionalism	Training
Goal base committee involvement	Resource allocation	Labor relationships
Ambulance staffing hours matrix	Safety	Social media relationship
Health and Fitness	Officers	Data info
Equipment	Drivers	Technology
Command structure	Education	Quality reserve –rigs
Facilities	Maintenance	M.I.H.
Disaster preparedness	PPE	Hospital relationships
Experience	Honesty	Media relationship
EMS (Utstein survival rate)	Union labor	Response time
Communication	Teamwork	Technical Rescue Team
Dedication	PRIDE	Community education
Support of administration (city)	History	Fire investigation
911 staff (center)	Adaptability	Passion
Proactivity	Regional leader	Accreditation
Retention	Respect	MABAS
Diversity	Recruitment	Fiscal responsibility
Innovating opportunities	Loyalty	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Weaknesses

Performance, or lack thereof, within an organization depends greatly on the identification of weaknesses and how they are confronted. While it is not unusual for these issues to be at the heart of the organization’s overall concerns, it is unusual for organizations to be able to identify and deal with these issues effectively on their own.

For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats to be identified later in this document, but rather those day-to-day issues and concerns that may slow or inhibit progress. The following items were identified by the internal stakeholders as weaknesses:

#### **Weaknesses of the Rockford Fire Department**

Knowledge of staffing procedures	Morale, attitude, negativity points noted in “Morale – Internal Review Results” survey
Finding facts / rumors	Knowledge of contractual issues
IT/technology support	Automatic Vehicle Locators / knowledge and inconsistency
Problem solving / follow through	Split driving
Too many reassignments ( ship out)	Lack of ambulances
Shop (missing mechanic)	Budget
Fire Apparatus Engineer classes	Training equipment (hose)
Service gaps (11,7,2 still)	Non adoption of UL and NIST tactics
Employee evaluation’s process	Manning / staffing
Promotional and retirement procedure	Sense of entitlement
Transfers	Precepting process
Leadership as it relates morale	Education of accreditation
Lack of defined EMS tasking	Increased youth monitoring
Uniforms	Social media
Community outreach (EMS)	Diversity
Vacant building identification and inspection	Spread too thin (call volume / daily duties)
Consistency with chain of command	Succession planning
National Fire Incident Reporting System software and PCR	Lack of 360 degree evaluations
Lack of precepting benefits	Abandoning rigs at scene
Personnel burnout (911, ambulance)	Fitness / health
Response times	Vacancies in 40 hour staffing





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional service area. The internal stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

#### **Opportunities for the Rockford Fire Department**

Grants	Media relations
External agencies relationships	Marketing opportunities
Social media	Outside training
Resource hospital	Rockford Public School 205
Mobile Integrated Healthcare Program	911 consolidated system
Technology	Vendors
Professional associations	Legislations
Governing bodies	MABAS
Educational institutions	Community at large
Emergency Management Agency	Candidate physical ability test
Market academy	More inter-department training (EMI)
Media and elected officials day	Transform Rockford
Alignment Rockford	Wellness clinic
Alternative transport options	Outreach / education to community
Better cooperation with city departments	Recruiting / diversity
Accreditation	New software ( PCR / reporting )
Sharing with similar communities	Creating revenue streams



**Internal Stakeholders Work Session**





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Threats

To draw strength and gain full benefit of any opportunity, the threats to the organization, with their new risks and challenges, must also be identified in the strategic planning process. By recognizing possible threats, an organization can greatly reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the internal stakeholders were as follows:

#### **Threats to the Rockford Fire Department**

Budget – local, state, federal	Politics
Natural and manmade disasters	Communications (emergency)
Civil unrest	Infrastructure- aging roads – bridges
Public health	Poverty
Economics	Decrease revenue – Medicare, Medicaid
Substance abuse - Violence	Vacant properties
Out sourcing - privatization	Legislation
Costly technological advancements	Homelessness
Unfunded mandates	Aging population
Media	PMA
City administrations / depts.	Social media (cell phone videos)
Increase call volume	Security at fire station
Abandoned rigs	Police support
Community apathy	Class warfare
Racial tension	Family dynamics
County 911 processes	Super users and abuse of services
Support of city administration	





### Critical Issues and Service Gaps

After reviewing the agency’s core programs and support services, and identifying internal strengths and weaknesses along with external opportunities and threats, two groups of internal stakeholders identified their primary critical issues and service gaps.

#### Critical Issues and Service Gap Issues Identified

- Workforce Planning	- Training	- Internal Communication
- External Communication	- Technology	- Tactics
- Employee Development	- Public Information	- Staffing
- Safety	- Marketing	- Outreach
- Evaluations		

### Strategic Initiatives

Having reviewed the agency’s critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified as the foundation for development of goals and objectives.

#### Prioritized Strategic Initiatives of the Rockford Fire Department

Staffing / Workforce Planning	Internal Communications
Management Processes	Employee Development
External Communications	Safety
Health & Wellness	Technology

### Goals and Objectives

In order to continuously achieve the mission of the RFD, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. These should become a focus of agency efforts, as they will direct the agency to its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives, and adjust timelines as needs and the environment change. Regular reports of progress and changes should be shared with RFD leadership.

*“Goals allow you to control the direction of change in your favor.”*

Brian Tracy,  
Author





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 1</b>		<b>Provide quality services through adequate staffing.</b>	
<b>Objective 1A</b>	<b>Define adequate staffing by conducting a comprehensive emergency / non-emergency workload analysis.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Bergsten, Corl, Monahan, Chris Scrol
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define adequate staffing.</li> <li>• Identify and analyze emergency response staffing levels and services (CPSE, SOC, NFPA).</li> <li>• Identify and analyze current non-emergency support staffing levels and functions. (prevention, logistics, training administration, operations, 911).</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 1B</b>	<b>Identify future staffing needs based on service delivery objectives and projected workloads.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	12-18 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and analyze unit utilization.</li> <li>• Develop and implement a tracking system for OOS status.</li> <li>• Review trial data on MIH and future program development.</li> <li>• Identify operational impacts by staffing reduction (split driving, OOS time, abandoned rigs, ship outs).</li> <li>• Track critical tasks by incident type.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 1C</b>	<b>Recruit and retain a competent and progressive workforce.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	On going	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community versus departmental demographics.</li> <li>• Continue working relationship w/RPS 205.</li> <li>• Expansion and development of explorer program.</li> <li>• Analyze data from past recruiting cycles.</li> <li>• Cultivate relationships with past candidates for future employment opportunities.</li> <li>• Maintain existing relationship with community stakeholders.</li> <li>• Network to develop future relationships.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Enhance the department's internal communication to support our mission.</b>		
<b>Objective 2A</b>	<b>Identify obstacles that interfere with internal communications.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	3 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Corl, Girone, Schnaper
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define supervisor roles.</li> <li>• Measure usage.</li> <li>• Investigate task streamlining.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 2B</b>	<b>Identify and analyze current methods of electronic communications.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	On going	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify current electronic communication platforms e.g., Share Point, internal email system, Target Solutions.</li> <li>• Analyze platforms for effectiveness and system compatibility.</li> <li>• Identify any new contemporary solutions needed to fill gaps.</li> <li>• Report findings to appropriate decision makers.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 2C</b>	<b>Identify and analyze current methods of disseminating face to face methods of communications.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	On going	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all current methods of interaction e.g., morning briefings, staff meetings, officer meetings, and committee meetings.</li> <li>• Analyze agendas, report memorandum, etc., for comprehensiveness.</li> <li>• Determine needs to improve quality and delivery.</li> <li>• Report findings.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 2D</b>	<b>Explore additional methods to supplement current internal communication methods.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate potential from any recommended changes in objectives A &amp; B.</li> <li>• Identify residual gaps in communication.</li> <li>• Seek solutions to overcome gaps e.g., newsletter, apps, resource manual, etc.</li> <li>• Report recommendations.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 2E</b>	<b>Develop and implement a plan based on analysis of objectives A-D.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	12 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a framework for program implementation.</li> <li>• Define responsibilities and recommend assignments.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver training needed for implementation.</li> <li>• Implement program</li> <li>• Review and re-evaluate.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Improve the organization's management processes to align with the department's core values.</b>		
<b>Objective 3A</b>	<b>Re-evaluate the preceptor program and implement needed changes</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	12 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Drerup, Tyo, Cantu, T. Brown, Vertiz, Hawkins
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-introduce the preceptor committee.</li> <li>• Gain access to the Fisdap, or Fisdap reports.</li> <li>• Identify department forms that can be eliminated.</li> <li>• Revise monthly evaluations.</li> <li>• Re-implement preceptor training.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 3B</b>	<b>Re-develop a relevant employment evaluation process</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	24 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate possible evaluation software such as NeoGov.</li> <li>• Revise and make needed to the self-evaluation form.</li> <li>• Revise and make needed changes to the employee evaluation.</li> <li>• Get approval from Human Resources.</li> <li>• Investigate and possibly implement 360 evaluation.</li> <li>• Update probationary evaluation.</li> <li>• Provide training on new forms.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 3C</b>	<b>Develop a defined process for employee investigations.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have meeting to discuss current investigation process.</li> <li>• Identify steps and responsibilities for each type of investigation.</li> <li>• Identify how to document and track investigations.</li> <li>• Develop written procedure.</li> <li>• Distribute written procedure to personnel.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Design and implement a comprehensive employee development program to enhance the knowledge and skill level of all operational functions in support of the RFD mission statement.</b>		
<b>Objective 4A</b>	<b>Clarify job performance expectations.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	On going	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Drerup, Schoonover, Hall
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop job performance expectation check list.</li> <li>• Create a career progression program.</li> <li>• Create position guide and task book.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 4B</b>	<b>Comprehensive review of the evaluation system.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	18 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create 360 evaluation process.</li> <li>• Review and update existing forms.</li> <li>• Revise frequency of evaluations</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 4C</b>	<b>Develop a program encouraging continuing education</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	On going	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide on duty time for continuing education.</li> <li>• Expand methods of instruction through technology.</li> <li>• Expand collaborative partnership with local higher education institutions.</li> <li>• Develop centralized system of disseminating educational and financial support information.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 4D</b>	<b>Implement a process by which to measure progress of employee development.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	Ongoing	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a statistical assessment of current career related education.</li> <li>• Determine the current levels of certification.</li> <li>• Identify deficiencies and needs for employee development and improvement.</li> <li>• Revise any and all systems to overcome the deficiencies.</li> <li>• Implement revised systems.</li> <li>• Collect and analyze all feedback.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 5 Develop effective community interaction.</b>	
<b>Objective 5A</b>	<b>Identify barriers to effective communication with the community.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	5 months <b>Assigned to:</b> Knott, Kloweit, White, Delarosa
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze survey results from external stakeholders.</li> <li>Identify most frequently mentioned areas of concern.</li> <li>Develop a communications specific survey.</li> <li>Attend community meeting to distribute communication surveys.</li> <li>Contact outreach agencies i.e., La Voz Latina– Transform, etc.</li> <li>Analyze communication survey results.</li> <li>Re-evaluate current education programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: _____ Consumable Costs: _____ Personnel Costs: _____ Contract Services Costs: _____
<b>Objective 5B</b>	<b>Develop a communications strategy that supports our programs and project objectives.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	4 months <b>Assigned to:</b> _____
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review policies to coincide with finding form objective A.</li> <li>Develop a new policy for how information will be communicated.</li> <li>Determine budgetary needs.</li> <li>Develop external contact list.</li> <li>Establish a PIO position.</li> <li>Develop key messages.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: _____ Consumable Costs: _____ Personnel Costs: _____ Contract Services Costs: _____
<b>Objective 5C</b>	<b>Implement needed changes.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	2 months <b>Assigned to:</b> _____
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement new communications plan.</li> <li>Secure funding sources.</li> <li>Integrate key messages with appropriate contact lists.</li> <li>Appoint PIO.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: _____ Consumable Costs: _____ Personnel Costs: _____ Contract Services Costs: _____
<b>Objective 5D</b>	<b>Evaluate implemented programs.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months and restart <b>Assigned to:</b> _____
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update key messages.</li> <li>Review and update contact lists.</li> <li>Review and update budgetary needs.</li> <li>Review PIO position and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: _____ Consumable Costs: _____ Personnel Costs: _____ Contract Services Costs: _____





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 6 Improve the safety of the Rockford Fire Department.</b>	
<b>Objective 6A</b>	<b>Identify the safety needs of RFD.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months <b>Assigned to:</b> Drerup, Knott, Schoville, B. Carlson
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review casualty reports to identify trends.</li> <li>• Review accident reports to identify trends.</li> <li>• Review current policies and procedures for compliance with national findings.</li> <li>• Review PIRs</li> <li>• Review employee concerns about safety</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs: Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:
<b>Objective 6B</b>	<b>Develop a plan to meet the needs.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	3 months <b>Assigned to:</b>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop new policies based on findings.</li> <li>• Develop new trainings based on findings.</li> <li>• Address identified equipment concerns.</li> <li>• Design and develop employee feedback mechanism for concerns.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs: Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:
<b>Objective 6C</b>	<b>Implement a comprehensive needs based program.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	3 months <b>Assigned to:</b>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the newly developed safety policies.</li> <li>• Implement the newly developed training programs.</li> <li>• Make any identified equipment changes.</li> <li>• Implement employee feedback mechanism(s).</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs: Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:
<b>Objective 6D</b>	<b>Assess and re-evaluate all implemented programs and processes.</b>
<b>Timeframe</b>	Ongoing <b>Assigned to:</b>
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review all current safety policies.</li> <li>• Review newly implemented training for effectiveness.</li> <li>• Review and assess all safety equipment.</li> <li>• Review and assess all reporting and feedback mechanisms.</li> <li>• Provide for revisions as identified.</li> </ul>
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Consumable Costs: Personnel Costs: Contract Services Costs:





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 7</b>	<b>Educate and promote the importance of employee wellness in the fire service.</b>		
<b>Objective 7A</b>	<b>Evaluate the current knowledge of available programs and resources.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 – 12 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Bergsten, Dempsey, Todd
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify current programs and resources.</li> <li>Create an evaluation tool.</li> <li>Analyze the results from the evaluation.</li> <li>Identify all needs resulting from the evaluation.</li> <li>Report findings.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 7B</b>	<b>Educate employees on the importance of behavior health.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	12-24 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define behavior health.</li> <li>Identify the most effective platform for communication of behavior health information.</li> <li>Deliver the information.</li> <li>Gather feedback on the effectiveness of the delivery.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 7C</b>	<b>Educate employees on the importance of physical health.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	12-24 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define physical health.</li> <li>Identify the most effective platform for communication of behavior health information.</li> <li>Deliver the information.</li> <li>Gather feedback on the effectiveness of the delivery.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 7D</b>	<b>Assess and re-evaluate all processes dealing with wellness.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	24-48 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribute a follow up evaluation too to all employees.</li> <li>Gather feedback on the current systems.</li> <li>Analyze the results from the evaluation.</li> <li>Identify any needs.</li> <li>Make revisions based on evaluation results.</li> <li>Monitor for change.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>Goal 8</b>	<b>Better utilize new and existing technology to enhance daily operations and department efficiency.</b>		
<b>Objective 8A</b>	<b>Research new records management software.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	Ongoing	<b>Assigned to:</b>	Knott, Russell, M. Renfro, Bolhous
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate current RMS to identify gaps in department needs for patient care reporting, NFIRS, inventory, staffing, fleet management, and preplans.</li> <li>• Identify any new areas of operation requiring records management.</li> <li>• Research and evaluate replacement RMS options – ensure system compatibility.</li> <li>• Report findings and develop RFP after approval.</li> <li>• Develop and deliver training program and implement a system test.</li> <li>• Implement new program department wide and evaluate results for goal compliance.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 8B</b>	<b>Evaluate the use of the automatic vehicle locator (AVL) system.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct a needs assessment of the AVL system.</li> <li>• Identify system weaknesses contributing to shortfalls in the needs assessment.</li> <li>• Determine the value of continued use, and provide recommendations.</li> <li>• Design and implement any needed training programs for continued use.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	
<b>Objective 8C</b>	<b>Vacant/condemned structure(s) notification.</b>		
<b>Timeframe</b>	6 months	<b>Assigned to:</b>	
<b>Critical Tasks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get information from the building department.</li> <li>• Develop and determine input codes.</li> <li>• Incorporate into dispatch.</li> <li>• Make information accessible to all personnel.</li> </ul>		
<b>Funding Estimate</b>	Capital Costs: Personnel Costs:	Consumable Costs: Contract Services Costs:	





### Vision

On the final day of the process, the CPSE presented the RFD a vision of where the agency will be in the future if the strategic plan is accomplished. This vision is intended as a target of excellence to strive toward, and provides a basis for its goals and objectives.

#### Vision of the Rockford Fire Department

We, the members of the Rockford Fire Department, envision an agency that continues to be widely known as an internationally accredited department that shows its PRIDE in the delivery of services to our community. Through the pursuit of our goals, we will demonstrate continuous improvement, guided by our values of professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication, and empathy.

Through our workforce planning and employee development initiatives, we will invest in our greatest organizational assets, our members, ensuring they are appropriately staffed and developed. This will be further enhanced by an expanded focus on our safety and wellness.

Our focus on the community through greater outreach and interaction will further prove our dedication for those we serve. The improved use of technology will further support our mission as we ensure to strive for efficiency and effectiveness in all we do. Through more defined management processes and internal communications, our unit integrity will be strengthened.

We will realize individual and department excellence as we hold one another accountable for fulfilling our mission, living our values, accomplishing our goals, and ensuring our vision becomes reality.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



### Performance Measurement

#### “Managing for Results”

As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on the assessment of progress toward achieving improved output. Collins states, “What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a *consistent and intelligent* method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor.”<sup>3</sup> They must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes. It has been stated that:

...successful strategic planning requires continuing review of actual accomplishments in comparison with the plan...periodic or continuous environmental scanning to assure that unforeseen developments do not sabotage the adopted plan or that emerging opportunities are not overlooked.<sup>4</sup>

#### Why Measure Performance?

It has been said that:

- *If you don't measure the results of your plan, you can't tell success from failure.*
- *If you can't see success, you can't reward it.*
- *If you can't reward success, you're probably rewarding failure.*
- *If you can't see success, you can't learn from it.*
- *If you can't recognize failure, you can't correct it.*
- *If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.*

Reinventing Government

David Osborn and Ted Gaebler

In order to establish that the RFD's Strategic Plan is achieving results, performance measurement data will be implemented and integrated as part of the plan. An integrated process, known as “Managing for Results,” will be utilized, which is based upon the following:

- The identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- The determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- The analyzing and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

<sup>3</sup> Collins Good to Great and the Social Sectors. Boulder, 2009

<sup>4</sup> Sorkin, Ferris and Hudak. Strategies for Cities and Counties. Public Technology, 1984.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



A “family of measures” that is typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes the following:

- **Inputs:** Value of resource used to produce an output.
- **Outputs:** Quantity or number of units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- **Efficiency:** Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- **Service Quality:** The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely a service is provided.
- **Outcome:** Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer. Outcome focuses on the ultimate “why” of providing a service.

## The Success of the Strategic Plan

RFD has approached its desire to develop and implement a strategic plan by asking for and receiving input from the community and members of the agency during the development stage of the planning process. The agency utilized professional guidance and the Community-Driven Strategic Planning Process to compile this document. The success of the RFD’s strategic plan will not depend upon implementation of the goals and their related objectives, but from support received from the authority having jurisdiction, membership of the agency, and the community at-large.

*“No matter how much you have achieved, you will always be merely good relative to what you can become. Greatness is an inherently dynamic process, not an end point.”*

Good to Great and the Social Sectors  
Jim Collins

Provided the community-driven strategic planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify internal and external stakeholders through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction; how all vested parties will work to achieve the mission, goals, and vision; and how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Matthews (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*





### Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, Initialisms

For the purposes of the Community-Driven Strategic Planning, the following terms and acronyms have the meanings set forth below:

<b>Accreditation</b>	A process by which an association or agency evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to institutions or agencies and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an agency.
<b>ALS</b>	Advanced Life Support
<b>APCO</b>	Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials
<b>CERT</b>	Community Emergency Response Team
<b>CFAI</b>	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
<b>CISD</b>	Critical Incident Stress Debriefing
<b>CPSE</b>	Center for Public Safety Excellence
<b>Customer(s)</b>	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the department or agency.
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>DOT</b>	Department of Transportation
<b>EAP</b>	Employee Assistance Program
<b>Efficiency</b>	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
<b>EMI</b>	Emergency Management Institute
<b>EMS</b>	Emergency Medical Services
<b>Environment</b>	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the boundaries of the organization.
<b>EOC</b>	Emergency Operations Center
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>Haz-Mat</b>	Hazardous materials
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>IAFF</b>	International Association of Fire Fighters
<b>IEMA</b>	Illinois Emergency Management Association
<b>IFSI</b>	Illinois Fire Service Institute
<b>Input</b>	A performance indication where the value of resources are used to produce an output.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



<b>ISO</b>	Insurance Services Office
<b>IT</b>	Information Technology
<b>MABAS</b>	Mutual Aid Box Alarm System
<b>MIH</b>	Mobile Integrated Healthcare
<b>Mission</b>	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
<b>NENA</b>	National Emergency Number Association
<b>NIST</b>	National Institute of Standards and Technology
<b>Outcome</b>	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
<b>Output</b>	A performance indication where a quality or number of units produced is identified.
<b>PCR</b>	Pre-hospital Care Report
<b>Performance Measure</b>	A specific measurable result for each goal and/or program that indicates achievement.
<b>Stakeholder</b>	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.
<b>Strategic Goal</b>	A broad target that defines how the agency will carry out its mission over a specific period of time. An aim; the final result of action. Something to accomplish in assisting the agency to move forward.
<b>Strategic Objective</b>	A specific, measurable accomplishment required to realize the successful completion of a strategic goal.
<b>Strategic Plan</b>	A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the agency and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.
<b>Strategic Planning</b>	The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.
<b>Strategy</b>	A description of how a strategic objective will be achieved. A possibility. A plan or methodology for achieving a goal.
<b>UL</b>	Underwriters Laboratories
<b>Vision</b>	An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.





# ROCKFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 2015-2020 Strategic Plan



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