



## Washington State Patrol 2024 Proposed Agency Request Legislation Z-0367.1 Fire Related Service Account

### **PURPOSE**

The Washington State Patrol State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) is requesting to eliminate the per capita analysis required by RCW 43.43.934 and allow the Basic Fire Fighter Training Reimbursement Program (BFFTRP) and the Regional Direct Delivery Program (RDDP) to operate independently. The proposed changes will give the Director of Fire Protection rule-making authority to carry out the purposes of RCW 43.43.934.

Both programs aim to ensure that both volunteer and career firefighters have access to training that will increase health and safety within the fire service and provide increased fire and life safety protection for citizens, their property, community, and the environment.

Increasing the resources utilized to develop and expand the RDDP will also increase the reimbursement rates for the BFFTRP, reducing the funding available to extend the RDDP. The RDDP significantly benefits rural volunteer fire districts that lack the resources to utilize the BFFTRP by providing training and then seeking reimbursement.

There is high demand for the RDDP, and there is a clear need to expand the program to fill this need better, but under the current reimbursement structure, the SFMO does not have adequate staffing or funding to administer the program to the level that meets the training needs of the fire service.

### **OUTCOMES**

Revising RCW 43.43.934 to establish the BFFTRP and the RDDP as separate and distinct programs will benefit both programs and allow the following actions to be taken:

- Add two full-time employees to support the RDDP adequately;
- Increase the number of RDDP recruit academies that will train fire service personnel to the Firefighter I level;
- Maintain the BFFTRP, so fire agencies can offset the cost of training to the Firefighter I level;
- Increase the number of volunteer and career personnel trained to the Firefighter I level.

### **IMPACTS**

Without the change to RCW 43.43.934, the BFFTRP and the RDDP program will remain in the competition, the per capita rate of RDDP will cause the BFFTRP to increase to a level that will reduce the number of volunteer and career personnel trained, and the RDDP will not be adequate staff to fulfill the potential.

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BILL REQUEST - CODE REVISER'S OFFICE

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BILL REQ. #: Z-0367.1/23

ATTY/TYPIST: RR:lel

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: Concerning the director of fire protection's administration and reimbursement of fire service-related training programs.

AN ACT Relating to the director of fire protection's administration and reimbursement of fire service-related training programs; and amending RCW 43.43.934.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec. 1.** RCW 43.43.934 and 2015 c 43 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

The director of fire protection shall:

(1) (a) (i) With the state board for community and technical colleges, provide academic, vocational, and field training programs for the fire service; and (ii) with the state colleges and universities, provide instructional programs requiring advanced training, especially in command and management skills;

(b) Cooperate with the common schools, technical and community colleges, institutions of higher education, and any department or division of the state, or of any county or municipal corporation in establishing and maintaining instruction in fire service training and education in accordance with any act of congress and legislation

enacted by the legislature in pursuance thereof and in establishing, building, and operating training and education facilities.

Industrial fire departments and private fire investigators may participate in training and education programs under this chapter for a reasonable fee established by rule;

(c) Develop and adopt a master plan for constructing, equipping, maintaining, and operating necessary fire service training and education facilities subject to the provisions of chapter 43.19 RCW;

(d) Develop and adopt a master plan for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of real estate necessary for fire service training and education facilities in a manner provided by law; and

(e) (i) Develop and adopt a plan for the Washington state patrol fire training academy to deliver basic firefighter training and testing to all city fire departments, fire protection districts, regional fire protection service authorities, and other public fire agencies in the state. The plan required by this subsection (1) (e) must specify that the delivery of training and testing services will be provided:

(A) To recipients in the following order of priority:

(I) Volunteer departments;

(II) Combination departments; and

(III) Fire agencies that employ only career firefighters and fire officers; and

(B) By personnel of the fire training academy, either at the academy's facilities in North Bend, Washington, or regionally at local fire agencies.

(ii) (~~(A) In lieu of receiving training and testing services from the fire training academy, city~~) City fire departments, fire protection districts, regional fire protection service authorities, and other public fire agencies in the state may seek reimbursement for their firefighter I training expenses in accordance with the rules established by the Washington state patrol, director of fire protection. (~~The amount of reimbursement will be calculated on a per capita basis. The per capita amount is equal to the three-year~~

~~statewide firefighter per capita average for the regional direct delivery of training by the fire training academy. The three-year statewide firefighter per capita average is calculated by dividing the number of firefighters trained using the regional direct delivery program during the three-year period into the total cost of providing regional direct delivery during the same three-year period. The regional direct delivery costs used for the basis of these calculations does not include the costs of the fire training academy personnel used to coordinate the direct delivery programs, the state's indirect costs, or any other indirect costs.~~

~~(B) Prior to the implementation of the reimbursement provisions in (c) (ii) (A) of this subsection, the amount of reimbursement for city fire departments, fire protection districts, regional fire protection service authorities, and other public fire agencies must be not less than three dollars for every one hour of firefighter I training, and may not exceed two hundred hours.)~~

(iii) Subject to approval by the director of fire protection, and in accordance with the plan required by this subsection (1) (e), the fire training academy facilities ((and programs)) must be made available at no cost to fire service youth programs. The goal of making these facilities ((and programs)) available is to increase enrollment of volunteer firefighters, and to improve gender, cultural, and ethnic diversity within the fire service.

(iv) For purposes of this subsection (1) (e), the following definitions apply:

(A) "Basic firefighter training and testing" means training and testing for firefighters that is up to and includes the requirements of firefighter I, as identified by the national fire protection association standard 1001;

(B) "Combination department" means a fire department with emergency service personnel comprising less than eighty-five percent of either volunteer or career membership;

(C) "Delivery of training" includes all resources, personnel, and equipment necessary to deliver training at the fire academy in North Bend, Washington, or regionally at local fire agencies; and

(D) "Volunteer department" means a fire department with volunteer emergency service personnel comprising eighty-five percent or greater of its department membership.

(2) (a) Promote mutual aid and disaster planning for fire services in this state;

(b) Assure the dissemination of information concerning the amount of fire damage including that damage caused by arson, and its causes and prevention; and

(c) Implement any legislation enacted by the legislature to meet the requirements of any acts of congress that apply to this section.

(3) In carrying out its statutory duties, the office of the state fire marshal shall give particular consideration to the appropriate roles to be played by the state and by local jurisdictions with fire protection responsibilities. Any determinations on the division of responsibility shall be made in consultation with local fire officials and their representatives.

To the extent possible, the office of the state fire marshal shall encourage development of regional units along compatible geographic, population, economic, and fire risk dimensions. Such regional units may serve to: (a) Reinforce coordination among state and local activities in fire service training, reporting, inspections, and investigations; (b) identify areas of special need, particularly in smaller jurisdictions with inadequate resources; (c) assist the state in its oversight responsibilities; (d) identify funding needs and options at both the state and local levels; and (e) provide models for building local capacity in fire protection programs.

(4) The Washington state patrol, through the director of fire protection, may adopt rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

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