

## APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2016.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: York County

Program Title: Training for Life... For Those Served and Those That Serve

Program Category: Criminal Justice & Public Safety

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Gail Whittaker

Title: Public Information Coordinator

Department: County Administration

Complete Mailing Address: P.O. Box 532, Yorktown VA 23690-0532

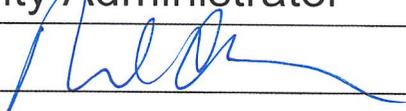
Telephone: 757-890-3300 Website: www.yorkcounty.gov

Email: whittgl@yorkcounty.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Neil Morgan

Title: County Administrator

Signature: 

## *County of York, Virginia*

### *VACo 2016 Achievement Award Submission*

# Training for Life... For Those Served and Those That Serve

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## **OVERVIEW**

The York County Department of Fire and Life Safety is fortunate to have a force of dedicated personnel that is always looking for creative and innovative ways to ensure that the services we provide are the very best. In keeping with this, recently a need was identified to conduct training on a Hampton Roads region-wide initiative involving fire attack, as well as fire victim rescue. This is referred to as Fire Dynamics, using the latest concepts of VEIS (Vent, Enter, Isolate, Search). Additionally, there was an ongoing need to conduct more critical in-depth training using training props known as the “Confidence Box” and “Mayday/Denver Drill” simulator. The training props were constructed and instruction was provided by a dedicated and pro-active group of department personnel. This comprehensive “trio” of programs, which we are calling “Training for Life...For Those Served and Those That Serve,” was intended to provide our personnel with both new knowledge regarding firefighting tactics, as well as to reinforce and intently train on critical skills using creatively designed and constructed training props.

## SUMMARY

Firefighting is an ever-evolving trade/science that has life and death consequences for both those that are served (citizens and visitors) and for those who serve (firefighting and rescue personnel). It is paramount that personnel understand the science of fire behavior and fire dynamics and that they maintain “currency” with the latest science and proven techniques that can be used to save the lives of our citizens and visitors, as well as saving their own lives (at a moment’s notice) when they are in peril (or the potential thereof). The issues are that the knowledge of fire behavior and fire/smoke movement and the skills necessary to be proficient in the techniques for each of the subject areas are highly technical and require an extensive knowledge of fire behavior and building construction, as well as smoke/fire migration/movement throughout buildings. This knowledge and the requisite skills (which degrade and are perishable over time if not practiced) are necessary to implement some of the new firefighting processes/procedures, as well as the ability for firefighters to take immediate action (in high risk/low frequency circumstances) to save their own lives or the lives of other firefighters when they become trapped while performing firefighting/rescue operations.

## SOLUTION

The programs are both didactic and skill based. Didactic training occurs in a classroom environment and then the skills are applied in a firefighting battlefield training environment. The department (through a dedicated group of personnel) began with the regional Fire Dynamics/VEIS program concept that was taught in a formal classroom setting, and then used an acquired structure (donated house that was slated for demolition) for hands-on, live firefighting/rescue training applying the strategy, tactics and techniques of the program. VEIS is a series of firefighting tactics/techniques that are used to search a structure for potential victims when the traditional approach of entering through the front door will not work. Subsequent to conducting the Fire Dynamics/VEIS training, a dedicated group of personnel

identified additional needs and training opportunities and came up with solutions to construct the necessary training props and present the programs. Therefore, a “Confidence Box” was built to simulate a firefighter becoming entangled in a confined space, and then having to do a self-rescue to disentangle themselves. This prop also allows the firefighter to practice navigating through a confined space which can be very difficult while wearing bulky and heavy turnout gear (firefighting protective clothing). Additionally, a window prop was built to simulate many of the scenarios that can be present at a structure fire. It can be used to perform VEIS, victim/downed firefighter removal through a window and down a ladder, Mayday/Denver Drill training and basement evolutions, to name a few. Training on all of these programs was provided to personnel throughout the department on duty while keeping services available throughout the county for actual emergencies, using creative and efficient scheduling and dynamic movement of station personnel and their response units.

## **COST**

The cost of these programs was minimal due to the use of on-duty personnel to backfill/cover fire station operations, which ensures ongoing county emergencies were managed appropriately. The “Confidence Box” and the window prop were constructed of plywood and only cost a couple of hundred dollars. Personnel dedicated time to construct these props. The acquired structure was donated for the program’s use and the only other costs were minimal and associated with live burn materials, nutritional/personnel rehabilitation supplies and instructional personnel costs.

## **RESULTS**

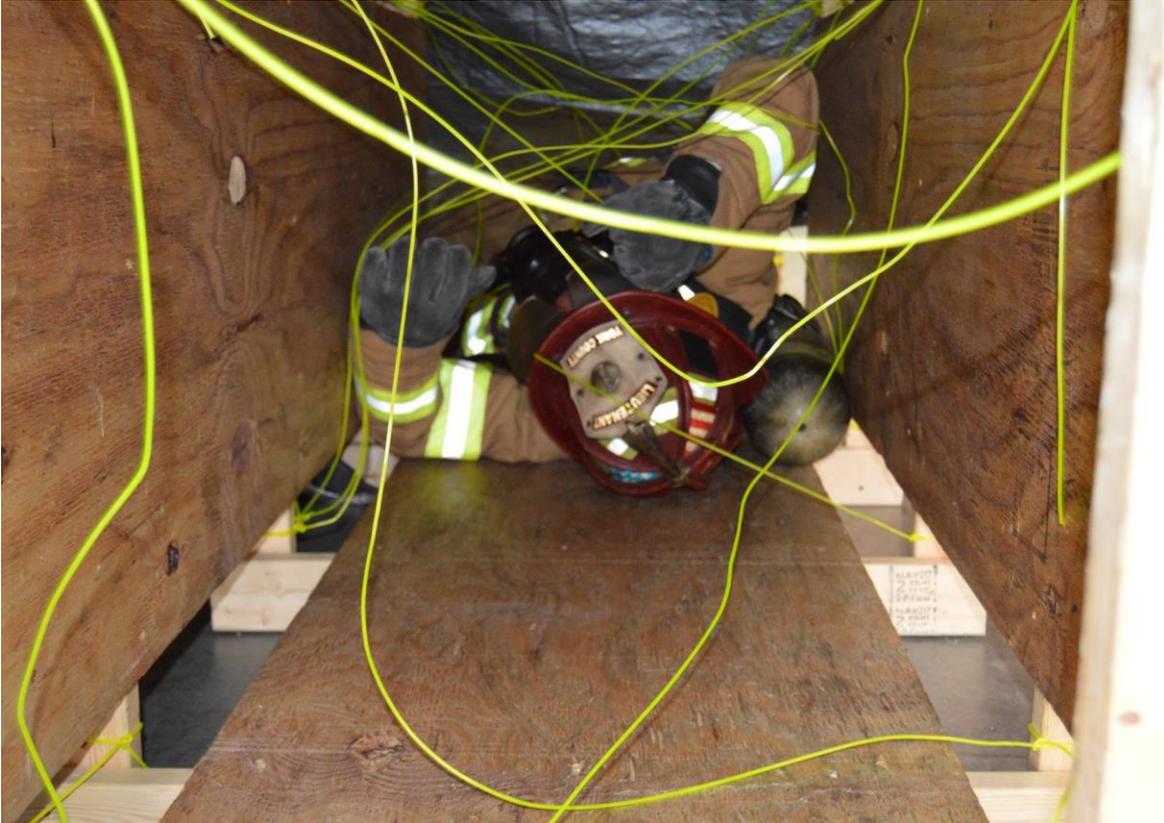
The department is extremely pleased with the outcome of the training programs. Much positive feedback has been provided by many of the members that have participated in the programs. The department plans to continue the training and on the latest tactics, strategies and techniques for the

department members to maintain a high level of strategic and tactical awareness and an effective response posture.

## **WORTHINESS**

The York County Department of Fire and Life Safety believes that these collective and innovative initiatives, as well as the extraordinary effort by a group of dedicated employees, is worthy of the recognition of this prestigious award. The department has always been committed to staying on the leading edge of our profession's recognized "contemporary" practices, science and, ultimately, operations and hope that our efforts will serve as a model for others. These initiatives address using the latest firefighting and rescue techniques for the protection and care of our citizens, businesses and visitors. Additionally, they place significant emphasis on training, processes and procedures that provide our members with the critical skills to ensure their safety and to be able to extricate themselves or other firefighters from a perilous situation.

Firefighters use training prop known as the "Confidence Box"



Firefighters train on Fire Dynamics/VEIS





Firefighters use training prop for MayDay/Denver drill practicing the rescue of a downed firefighter

