



Virginia Association of Counties ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

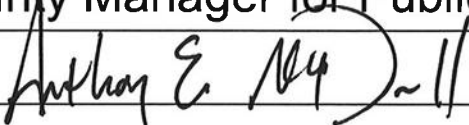
PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico
Program Title: Light Duty Program
Program Category: Organizational Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Anthony McDowell
Title: Deputy County Manager for Public Safety
Signature: 

Program Overview

The Light Duty Program, which began in April 2018, is an internal staffing tool that allows for a high-level of accountability of personnel working light duty, provides support in areas understaffed, and exposes employees to various facets of the organization. The purpose of the program is two-fold. Firstly, the program acts as an administrative and operational tracking mechanism to ensure the Henrico County Division of Fire utilizes all available human capital to our best ability by centralizing the process for evaluating and assigning personnel to light duty assignments. In addition, it allows for an enhanced level of accountability when employees are transitioning between supervisors and work assignment. The Light Duty Program provides a formalized structure for accounting for these movements. Through the work of the program, the Division of Fire has been able to provide supplemental staffing to administrative branches of the Division and encourage professional development in areas outside of a firefighter's normal daily responsibilities.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Historically, Light Duty was treated as any other work assignment within the Division of Fire. Employees were not assigned to light duty positions without any degree of formality. Employees' particular injury and the Division's needs were not evaluated for compatibility, so resource allocation and risk management issues were identified. Without having a focused degree of attention on both the assignment process and the type of job the employee was being assigned to, there was always a degree of confusion surrounding the program. Finally, accounting for the individual in the daily or monthly staffing projections and assignments complicated supervisory matters.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

The light duty program provides an innovative solution to managing the throughput of requests for light duty through innovative practices. It does not create new positions or require additional work. Instead it utilizes a collaborative approach to management to collect all responsible parties to complete the mission. This is a model for other localities in that it is an example of preventing silos of management within an organization and forces different sections to work together.

How Program Was Carried Out

The primary job duties of firefighters are inherently dangerous. While our goal is for all employees to be safe and healthy throughout every shift, injuries are bound to happen as part of such a dangerous job. The primary objective of The Light Duty Program is to bring injured employees, who have been approved for light duty, back to work as soon as possible so they may become re-engaged in Division activities, maintain their value within the organization, and ultimately, facilitate a return to a full-duty status. Historically, without any programmatic encouragement, employees who were out of work on injury leave would not seek light duty status because the program was scattered across several offices in the Division of Fire without centralized management. The Light Duty Program helps to facilitate that throughput of getting employees back to work in a way that we did not have before.

This is an internally facing customer service initiative. Our primary customer of the Light Duty Program is both the injured employee and internal sections of the Division of Fire who need support to complete special projects. The injured employee completes the necessary paperwork with his or her chain of command and physician, then submits it to the internal, multisectoral workgroup. This workgroup of stakeholders evaluates each case for the following aspects: injury type, length of recovery, physical capabilities while recovering, organizational needs, and vacancy management.

The program was developed out of a desire to get more employees back to work faster. We needed a systematic way of identifying employees who were eligible to work light duty and pairing them with jobs that were available. It took approximately six months to develop the program and then two months for education and deployment.

The Light Duty Program is a successful collaboration between Henrico County Human Resources, Risk Management, Employee Health Services, and the Division of Fire. All partners collaborated on the process during the development phase to ensure all stakeholders would receive the appropriate and necessary information.

Financing and Staffing

The most significant cost of the Light Duty Program is the time investment in shoring up processes and relationships between departments. There are no capital costs associated with the program. All members who administrate the program can adjust their work responsibilities to meet the demands of the program within their regular work schedule. All operating costs are covered within existing resources.

Program Results

The success of the Light Duty Program can be seen in the outcomes of personnel assigned to work light duty positions. Five employees assigned to the Light Duty Program installed a total of 381 smoke alarms as part of the Smoke Alarm Initiative through Henrico Fire Planning. One employee working light duty was able to assist with both the planning, execution, and delivery of the Henrico Fire Officers Academy. Several employees over the last year were able to continuously work in fire training filing paperwork and completing entries in the Division of Fire training software called Target Solutions for an average of 20 hours per week. One employee

who worked light duty was quoted as saying, “(working) Light duty gave me the opportunity to return to work and feel as though I was able to contribute to the overall success of the department even though I was unable to directly support my peers in the district responding to calls.” This speaks to the intrinsic benefit of being able to return to work when able to help keep the employee motivated.

Brief Summary

The light duty program provides an avenue for program management and execution that is unique in the Division of Fire. It takes various members from across administration that were previously performing various tasks associated with placing someone on or removing them from light duty and codifies the importance of teamwork. This result driven, intentional teamwork utilizes pre-existing staff and requires no additional full-time employees and reduces overtime expenses by assigning employees to light duty jobs that match their abilities.