



First Responder Needs Assessment

November 2019

A Focus on Northern Michigan



A Joint Project of
**Michigan Rural EMS Network and
Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association**

Prepared by:
Kay Balcer, Consultant
Balcer Consulting & Prevention Services

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Collaborators	2
First Responders	2
Funders	2
Project Partners	3
Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association (NMFCA)	3
Michigan Rural EMS Network (MiREMS)	3
Project Partnership	3
Executive Summary	4
Methodology	5
Needs Assessment Data	8
Challenges	8
Recruitment and Retention	10
Impact of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders	24
Critical Stress Among First Responders	27
Quality Assurance and Improvement	33
Dispatch Characteristics	34
Next Steps	35
Dissemination of Needs Assessment	35
Continued Dialogue	35



Acknowledgements

Collaborators

Bill Forbush, President, MiREMS Board of Directors; President, NMFCA Board of Directors

Kay Balcer, MiREMS Contractor, Balcer Consulting and Prevention Services

Leslie Hall, Executive Director, MiREMS

Linda Stone, Executive Director, NMFCA

MiREMS Board of Directors

NMFCA Board of Directors

Peggy Nietiedt, Contractor, MiREMS

Shelly Hamilton, Business Manager, MiREMS

Trent Douglas, Contractor, MiREMS

First Responders

We owe our deepest appreciation to the 611 first responders who participated in the Michigan Emergency Services Survey, and the 256 fire and EMS leaders who completed the Michigan First Responder Department Profile. This needs assessment is a result of your time and thoughtful responses. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the first responders who provided input and insight through meetings and focus groups. Thank you!

Funders

This needs assessment was conducted to address objectives of two federally funded grant projects serving the northern counties of the lower peninsula of Michigan.

- SAFER Grant Program: The staffing needs assessment and report were funded through the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program, US Fire Administration, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security. (Award EMW-2017-FF-00287).
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Project Partners

Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association (NMFCA)

The purpose of the NMFCA is to provide a forum to improve the professional standards and leadership of all Fire Departments in Northern Lower Michigan. Association members focus on promoting the advancement of fire prevention, fire safety fire suppression, emergency medical services, and other fire service related services for the preservation of life and property.

Specifically, NMFCA has four specific goals:

- 1) To improve the professional development of Chief Fire Officers through networking,
- 2) To improve and intensify Fire Department training and Fire Fighter Safety,
- 3) To promote and support legislation for the advancement of the fire service, and
- 4) To work with governmental units at all levels for better fire related programs.

The geographic area of the Association is the northern portion of the lower peninsula of the State of Michigan which includes all counties and/or municipalities in the geographic area north of US-10, east of US-127, and north of M-46.

Michigan Rural EMS Network (MiREMS)

The focus of Michigan Rural EMS Network is to provide support to Michigan rural emergency medical response agencies. In 2008, two Michigan counties came together to form the Huron-Sanilac EMS network. Over the next three years, the nine EMS agencies in these counties worked together to address recruitment and retention issues in the region. Due to the success of the two county initiative, leaders decided to investigate the need for, and potential of, expanding efforts to become a state-wide initiative. This resulted in development of the Michigan Rural EMS Network. MiREMS was incorporated in July 2011 and was approved for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in September 2012. Through ongoing needs assessments and feedback from members, the Michigan Rural EMS Network develops programs and initiatives to fulfill its mission to meet the needs of rural first responders.

Project Partnership

In 2018 through shared leadership, the Michigan Rural EMS Network and Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association established a partnership to address common goals. The collaboration was based on three core beliefs:

- Rural first responders have unique challenges
- Individual fire and EMS departments have limited resources and capacity due to low call volume and/or part time/volunteer personnel structures.
- The link between fire departments and EMS is important to improving patient outcomes, reducing property damage, and increasing the health and safety of first responders.

The Board of Directors of both organizations approved a joint needs assessment project in Northern Michigan that would assess a wide variety of challenges experienced by first responders in Northern Michigan. Due to the variety of topics identified for inclusion, MiREMS and NMFCA decided to combine two needs assessments into one process. This resulted in cost savings in conducting the assessment, and time savings for first responders participating in the assessment.

Northern Michigan Needs Assessment Highlights

- 91% of managers identified recruitment of new personnel or volunteers as a major or moderate challenge.
- Based on analysis of Fire Marshall data, between 55-87% of non-career fire departments operate at below optimal personnel levels.
- According to Department Profile data, 23% of departments (fire and EMS) experienced a net loss in personnel in the last year and 19% had no change.
- 24% of first responders indicate they will provide services for less than five more years.
- Time, lack of interest, and low pay were the top three recruitment barriers.
- 75% of departments indicated they had an assigned person for training. Of those, 83% said that the individual spent less than 5 hours a week on training.
- 76% of survey respondents indicated an increase in mental health calls and 87% an increase in substance use calls.
- Less than 50% of first responders indicated that their training prepared them well for mental health calls.
- Over 60% of survey respondents were interested in training related to behavioral health topics.
- 65% of survey respondents reported experiencing critical stress and 14% had thought about suicide.
- Of respondents who experienced critical stress, PTSD, or suicidal thoughts, only 31% sought help.

Executive Summary

In 2018 the Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association (NMFCA) and Michigan Rural EMS Network (MiREMS) began work on a project to assess the needs of fire and EMS agencies in northern lower peninsula of Michigan. The needs assessment consisted of analysis of data from the Michigan Fire Marshall, Department Profiles completed by management of fire and EMS agencies, and a First Responder Survey. Feedback on preliminary results and potential strategies was obtained through a variety of meetings. The Needs Assessment focused on thirty-six counties in the primarily rural northern region.

Based on data from the Michigan Fire Marshall, 302 non-career fire departments were identified. Using NFPA standards and the population for each department's coverage area, the optimal personnel number was identified.

Department Profiles and First Responder Surveys were distributed largely by email and posting of online links. Some copies were distributed at meetings or through personal contact with departments. Department profiles were also distributed in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and through incidental contact with departments in southern Michigan. First responder surveys were distributed more broadly throughout the state of Michigan via email lists.

A total of 256 Department profiles were completed with 173 indicating service in the Northern Region. Of the 611 first responders who completed the Michigan Emergency Services Survey, 250 or 42% indicated that their primary service area was in the Northern Region. Topics covered in the Department Profile and/or surveys included recruitment and retention of personnel, training and education, emergency response related to the impact of mental health and substance use disorders, critical stress among first responders, quality assurance and improvement, and emergency dispatch.

The full report is available at www.michiefs.org/NMFCA or www.MiREMS.org. Next steps for the collaborative project include hiring a recruitment and retention coordinator, launching a marketing campaign, and assisting departments with their recruitment and retention needs. Data from the needs assessment will guide marketing efforts and technical assistance.

Methodology

Northern Michigan Volunteer Fire Department Personnel Analysis: Data from the Michigan Fire Marshall online directory was reviewed and used to estimate the number of current non-career fire departments and personnel reported by departments in the region. Based on this data, an analysis of personnel needs was conducted. Results from this analysis are included in this report.

Michigan First Responder Department Profile: A department profile was developed from survey tools developed and previously used by the Huron-Sanilac EMS Task Force and the Michigan Center for Rural Health as part of an EMS needs assessment commissioned by the Michigan Rural EMS Network. The Department Profile was made available via an online link, a downloadable paper version, and paper copies. Distribution began with an emailed announcement and an online link. Contact information was obtained during analysis of personnel data from the Michigan Fire Marshall online directory, as well as the Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Division, and was supplemented by mailing lists from the project partners. The department profile was distributed over a 10 month period to approximately 600 departments in Michigan with a focus on Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. The first four months consisted primarily of online distribution of the survey. Personal connections were leveraged, and drawings were used to increase return rates. In July 2019 paper surveys were sent via the postal service to those who had not responded to the email announcement, or for whom emails were not available. In person outreach was conducted in September and October 2019 via phone calls, attendance at industry events, and personal meetings. Department Profiles were provided to a total of 395 fire and/or EMS departments in the northern region. Of those 395, 302 are non-career fire departments and 18 are non-career EMS departments (not in fire departments). Seventy-five were classified as career departments. In the Upper Peninsula 159 departments were provided Department Profiles. The link to the surveys was posted on Facebook and also forwarded to colleagues by email. It is likely that some survey participants were not included in the original email list. Thirty-one profiles were received from the southern portion of lower peninsula of Michigan. Profiles will continue to be accepted until June 30, 2020 in order to capture baseline data for a Recruitment and Retention Implementation Project funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Department Profile data will also be instrumental in identifying departments in the region that have the greatest need for assistance with recruitment and retention of personnel.

Michigan Emergency Services Survey: A First Responder Survey was developed using survey tools developed for previous EMS only assessments conducted by the Huron-Sanilac EMS Task Force and Michigan Rural EMS Network. The new survey instrument included fire and EMS related questions and was made available via an online link, downloadable paper version, and paper copies. Distribution began with an email announcement with an online link, posting on Facebook, and requests for fire chiefs and EMS managers to distribute to personnel. While emphasis was on the northern region, the survey was available throughout the entire state in order to collect data for comparison of needs. Contact information for chiefs and managers was obtained during analysis of personnel data from the Michigan Fire Marshall online directory and the Michigan Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Division. This information was supplemented by mailing lists from the project partners. The survey was distributed over a four-month period to over 1500 emails. Paper surveys and the online link were also distributed at meetings. A follow up survey will be conducted in 2024 to measure the impact of projects.



Analysis: Analysis tools, including filtering and comparison analysis, available via the online platform, www.surveymonkey.com, were used for the evaluation of data. Although the project has data analysis limitations, the overall response rates and number of surveys collected were satisfactory to draw conclusions. Disaggregation of data was limited due to smaller size of subgroups. For example, only 11 career departments in the Northern region completed profiles. However, there are only 18 in the region. In addition, due to the lack of information regarding the number of licensed individuals and their demographics (e.g. age, gender), weighting was not possible. As a self-selected sample, the respondents may also have some inherent characteristics or biases that would make them more likely to complete a survey or department profile. Although clear, concise and adequate directions were provided some language used or certain questions still may have been subject to interpretation by the participants. For example, volunteer and career are defined differently, not only by individuals but by organizations. In future assessments, adding a question that asks for the respondent’s region would make data analysis easier. Also, having a question asking if the department was fire, EMS, or a combined department would have been helpful.

Participants

The needs assessment used a convenience sampling of individuals. All individuals who had opted out of online surveys via the automatic email process in www.surveymonkey.com were only sent paper surveys. Those who were emailed a survey were offered an opt-out of future emails. Every county in the region was represented with a response for the department profile, first responder survey, or both. The following table illustrates the # of respondents indicating they serve each county. Some respondents indicated that they served multiple counties.

Northern Michigan- Number of Responses by County *

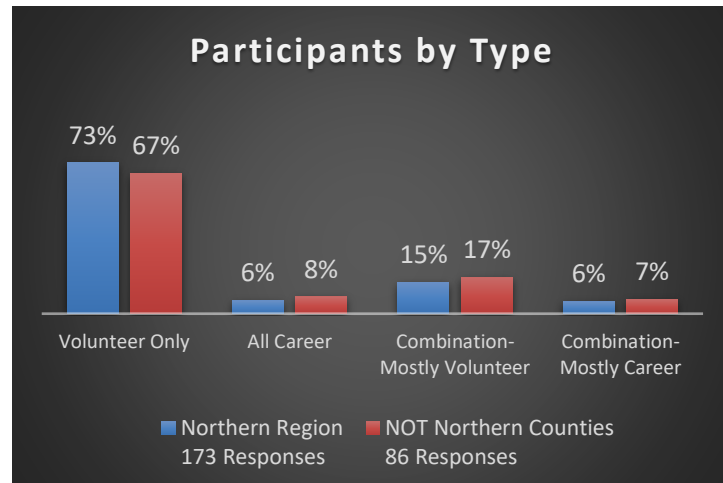
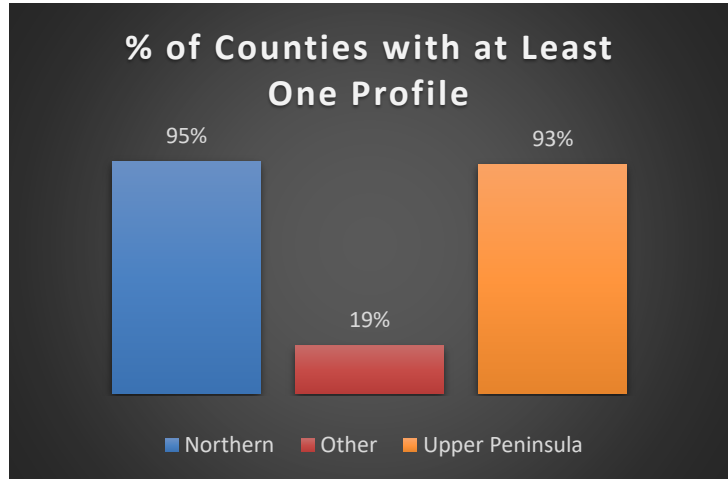
County	Department Profiles	First Responder Surveys	County	Department Profiles	First Responder Surveys
Alcona	8	20	Leelanau	2	8
Alpena	5	36	Manistee	7	9
Antrim	11	17	Mason	6	8
Arenac	4	6	Mecosta	9	10
Bay	8	21	Midland	7	12
Benzie	5	5	Missaukee	5	3
Charlevoix	9	16	Montmorency	3	13
Cheboygan	8	12	Newaygo	2	5
Clare	3	5	Oceana	5	6
Crawford	7	21	Ogemaw	5	6
Emmet	9	10	Osceola	5	5
Gladwin	3	5	Oscoda	4	9
Grand Traverse	11	22	Otsego	8	14
Huron	0	16	Presque Isle	7	20
Iosco	6	10	Roscommon	15	15
Isabella	7	9	Sanilac	0	9
Kalkaska	6	13	Tuscola	1	5
Lake	5	7	Wexford	7	8

*There were a number of departments that indicated that they served multiple counties.



Michigan First Responder Department Profiles

Of the 395 fire and EMS departments in Northern Michigan, 173 had responded at the time of this report for a response rate of 44%. Of those completing the department profiles in the northern region, only 11 indicated that they were all career. With 320 non-career fire and EMS departments, 162 volunteer department responses were received for a return rate of 52% of the non-career departments in the northern region. Of the 159 departments identified in the Upper Peninsula (U.P.), 44 were completed for a 28% return rate. Thirty-one additional profiles from areas of the state outside of northern Michigan and the U.P. were received. Almost all of the counties in Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula had at least one department/agency submit a profile.



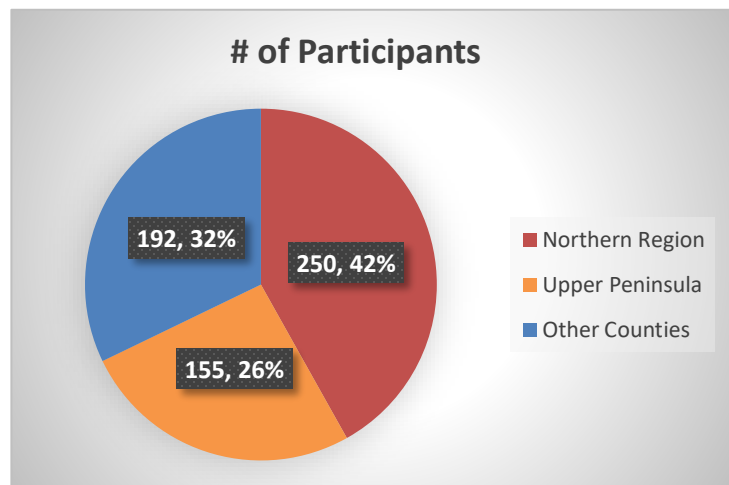
Those completing the department profile indicated the type of personnel structure within their department. Departments in the Northern Region were more likely by five percentage points to be all volunteer departments. Only 11 departments in the northern region indicated that they were all career.

NOTE: Throughout this document graphs and charts from the Department Profile are depicted with a dark grey background.

Michigan Emergency Services Survey

Over a six month time period, 611 first responders completed the Michigan Emergency Services Survey. Some of the respondents indicated that their primary service area included multiple counties. As this report focuses on the northern region, comparisons through the document will include the **Northern Region** and **Not Northern Counties**. A supplemental report will be prepared for the Upper Peninsula through other funding.

NOTE: Throughout this document graphs and charts from the First Responder Survey are depicted with a light grey background.



Needs Assessment Data

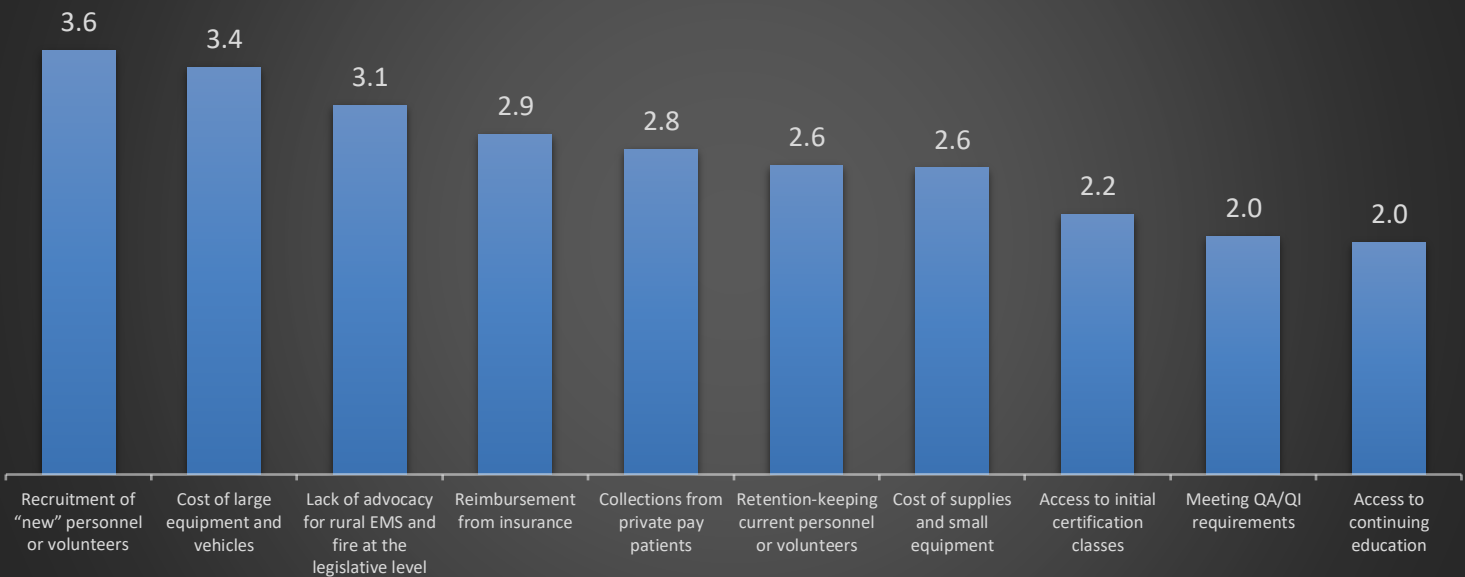
Challenges

Michigan First Responder Department Profiles

Individuals who completed department profiles were asked to rate common challenges on a four point rating scale. In addition to the choices provided participants were allowed to list additional challenges. Open ended responses were coded and results tabulated.

Northern Region	% Major or Moderate Challenge	Major Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Minor Challenge	Not a Challenge	N/A	Average Score
Recruitment of “new” personnel or volunteers	91%	68%	23%	5%	3%	1%	3.6
Cost of large equipment and vehicles	85%	62%	22%	12%	3%	0%	3.4
Lack of advocacy for rural EMS and fire at the legislative level	70%	41%	29%	16%	7%	7%	3.1
Reimbursement from insurance	39%	20%	18%	11%	8%	42%	2.9
Collections from private pay patients	21%	13%	9%	12%	5%	62%	2.8
Retention-keeping current personnel or volunteers	57%	12%	45%	32%	10%	2%	2.6
Cost of supplies and small equipment	53%	20%	33%	33%	14%	0%	2.6
Access to initial certification classes	36%	8%	29%	36%	25%	2%	2.2
Meeting QA/QI requirements	22%	8%	15%	32%	29%	16%	2.0
Access to continuing education	28%	6%	22%	30%	38%	4%	2.0

Northern Region Challenges
1-Low to High-4

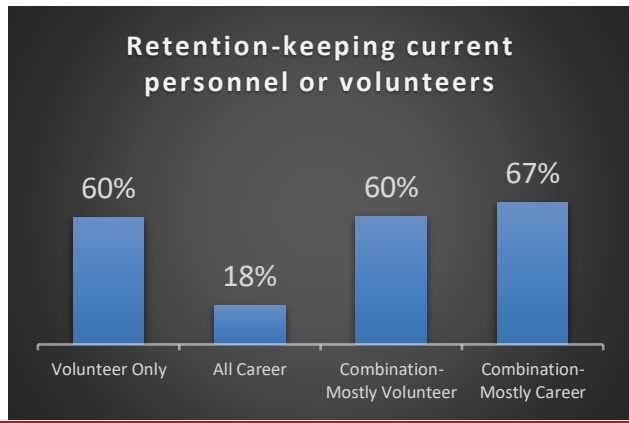
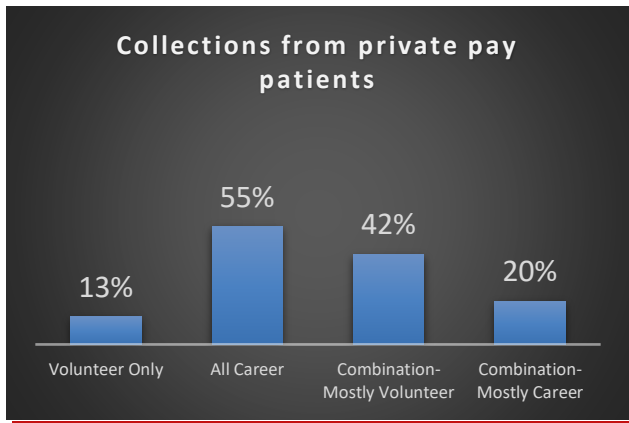
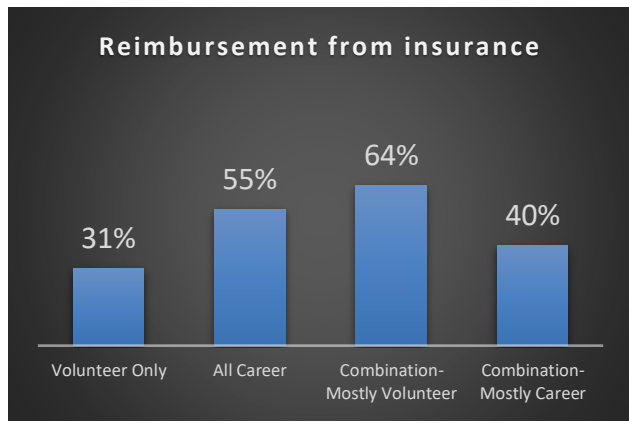
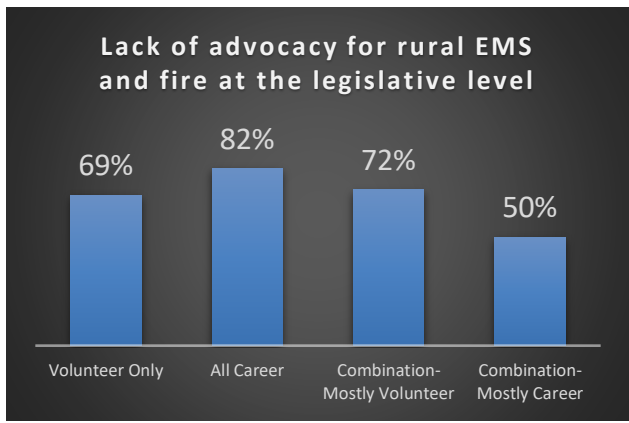
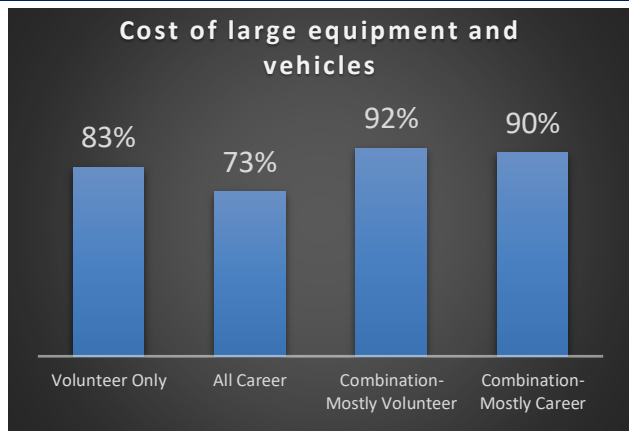
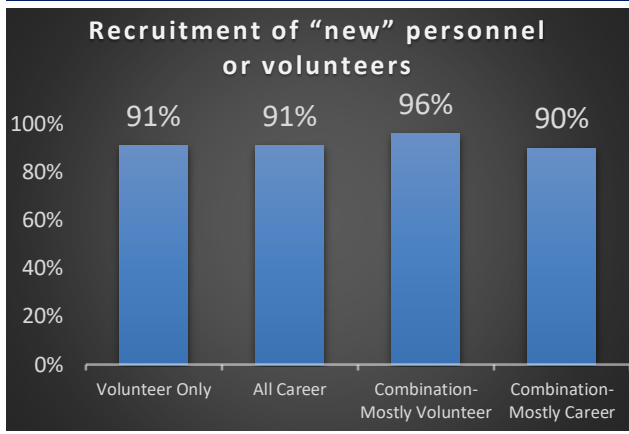


Other Challenges-Northern Region # of Coded Responses

Training Requirements	7
Available Training	3
Local Support	3
Rural Advocacy	3
Funding	2
Recruiting Young People	2
Regulations	2
Reimbursement Policy	2
Aging Personnel	1
Facility	1
Response to Calls	1

Surveys results indicated some variation between type of departments in the region. The following charts outline differences regarding major challenges by department type.

Northern Region: % Indicating that issue is a Major or Moderate Challenge (Top 6 Issues)



Recruitment and Retention

Levels of Current Personnel

Volunteer and combination firefighter workforce shortages were estimated from data accessed from the Fire Marshall Directory for fire departments in the Northern Region. The process used for the analysis included determining Career and Non Career fire departments using the categories provided by in the Fire Marshall data. Departments were determined non-career if the following criteria were met:

- 1) If any unpaid staff
- 2) If no full time paid
- 3) If full and part time paid and the number fell under 10 or population was under 18,000
- 4) DNR services were determined to be career and excluded regardless of the first three criteria.

For the Non-Career services, NFPA 1720 was used to determine by population the minimum number of firefighters necessary. This minimum was subtracted from total reported to calculate the surplus or shortage. To conduct the analysis, four assumptions were developed with input from volunteer departments. They include:

- 1) NFPA Compliance is recommended minimum staffing for a response
- 2) In volunteer (non-career) departments, response is not 100% to every call.
- 3) Daytime calls may have 50% or less depending on type of call.
- 4) Night and weekend calls may have 75% or less depending on type of call.

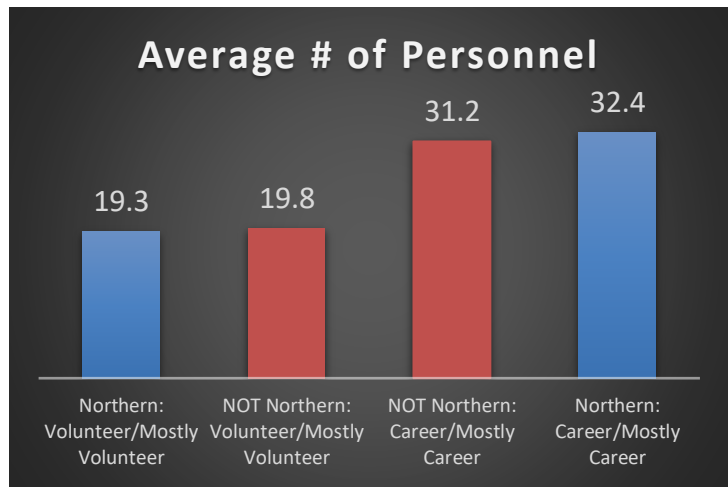
Based on population noted by Fire Marshall and determined NFPA required staffing minimum, the shortage or surplus was calculated from Fire Marshall personnel data at both 50% and 75% response from staffing numbers reported to the Fire Marshall.

Non-career	# of Depts	% of Depts	Response needed firefighters-NFPA 1720	Total Personnel reported to FM	50% of personnel available at any time	Surplus/ shortage at 50%	75% of personnel available at any time	Surplus/ Shortage at 75%
Totals Non Career Dept	302	100%	4323	6231	3115.5	-1207.5	4673.25	350.25
Totals only non career departments with shortages at 50% response	264	87%	3813	4985	2492.5	-1320.5	3738.75	-74.25
Totals only non career departments with shortages at 75% response	146	55%	1775	1783	891.5	-883.5	1337.25	-437.75



Participants on the Department Profile were asked to report their total number of active personnel. Based on the number of departments responding to the questions, an average number of personnel were calculated.

When asked how many people joined and left their department in the past year, there was a wide range of net loss/gains. This points to a need to developed programs and supports that are individualized.



Average Number of Personnel	All Responses	All Northern	All or Mostly Volunteer-Northern	All or Mostly Volunteer-NOT Northern	All or Mostly Career-Northern	All or Mostly Career-NOT Northern
JOINED your department?	5.2	5.2	4.8	4.8	8.3	8.6
LEFT your department?	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.4	6.2	8.0
Surplus or Deficit	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.4	2.1	0.6

Variation	All Northern Responses		
	# of Dept.	%	Range
Those experiencing a Net Loss	37	23%	-1 to -8
No Change	30	19%	0
Those experiencing a Net Gain	95	59%	1 to 20

Not all services are experiencing the same degree of challenges related to personnel. This indicates that the types of responses are likely to need customization.

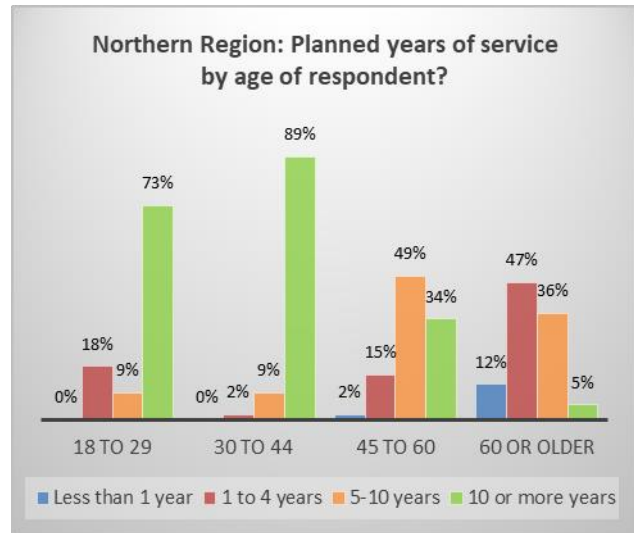
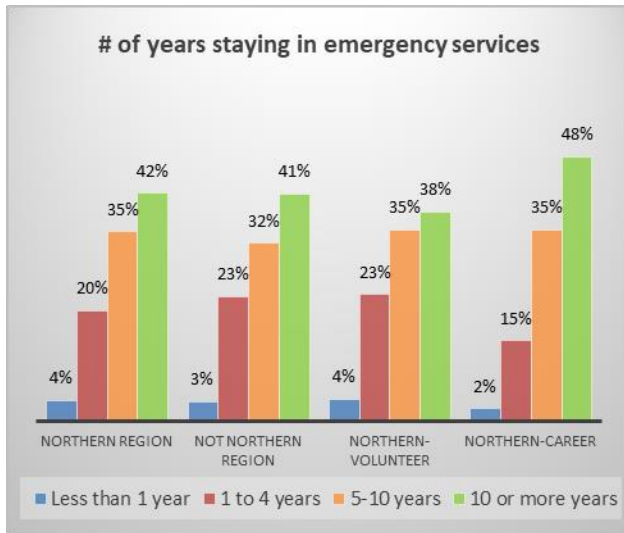
“We need to redouble our efforts to help local communities bolster volunteer staffing levels,” said Quinn. “We should also start thinking about the practical implications of lower volunteer numbers, and how fire protection and emergency medical services are delivered by agencies that are struggling to maintain volunteer staffing. Finally, it is important to recognize that the staffing needs in every fire and EMS agency are unique. Departments in super rural areas are going to have very different challenges than departments that are in or near a large population centers, for instance. There is no such thing as a ‘typical’ fire department, and I would caution against making assumptions about the circumstances of any particular agency based on the data in this or any other national- or state-level report.”

*Kevin D. Quinn, Chairperson.
National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)*

<https://www.nvfc.org/new-nfpa-report-finds-significant-decline-in-volunteer-firefighter-numbers/>



Participants in the First Responder Survey were asked “How many more years do you plan to remain active in emergency services?”



Respondents were asked the reasons for staying or planning to leave. Answers to the open ended question were coded and categorized. The chart below summarizes responses for the Northern Region.

Reasons for Staying	# of Responses
Enjoy-Love the Job	61
Community Service	58
Waiting for Retirement	19
Helping Others	15
Lack of other Volunteers	14
Good Pay-Benefits	11
Age	7
Rewarding Job	7
Able to serve	4
Advancement Opportunities	3
Department Loyalty	3
Job-Back up Pay	3
Personal Development	3
Family	2
Growth of Service	2
Leadership in Department	2
Mentoring others	2
Work Environment	2
Convenient, Flexibility in Scheduling, Injury, Local Area, Meeting Requirements for Medical Career, Part of my Life	1 response each

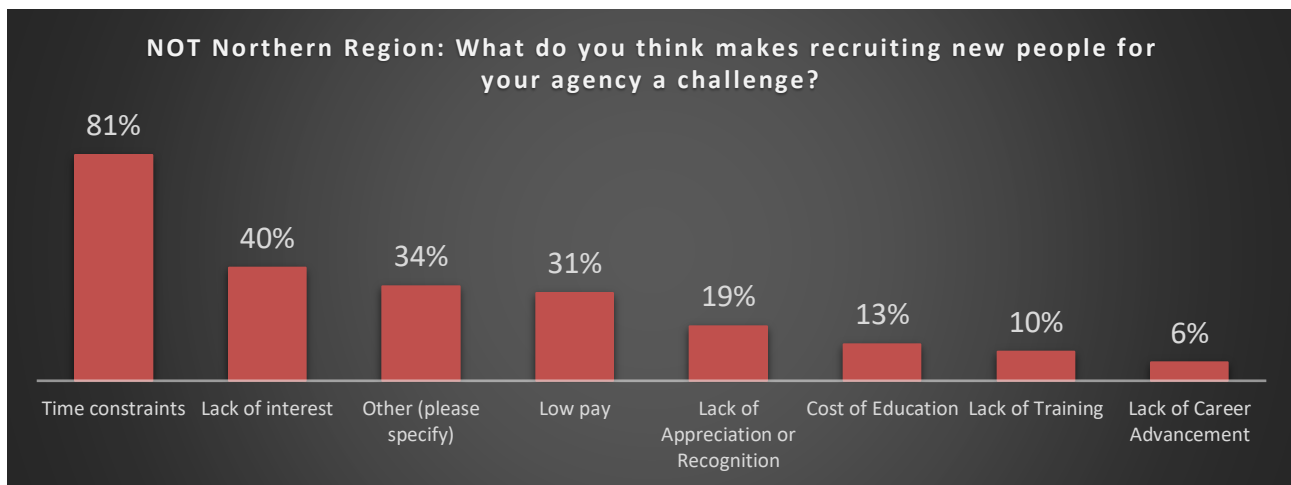
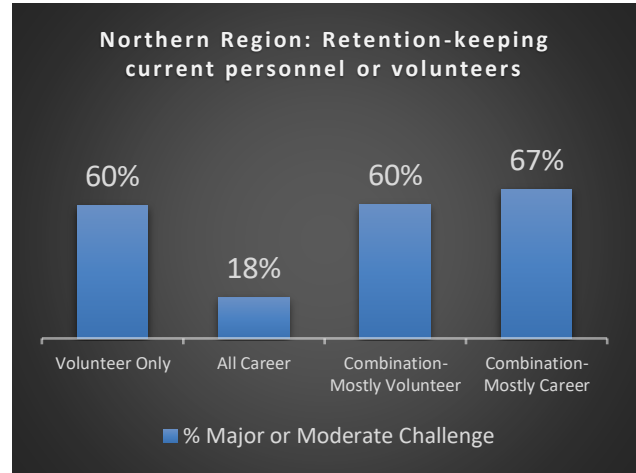
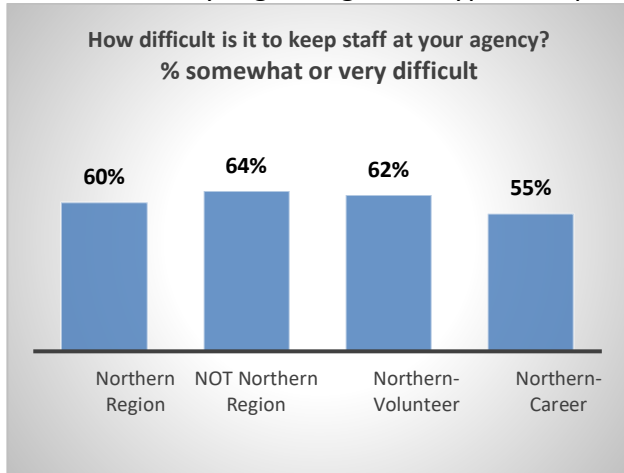
Reasons for Leaving	# of Responses
Retirement-Age	47
Other Opportunities	3
Family	2
Low Morale	1
Low pay	1
Politics	1
Stress	1
Poor pay-Benefits	1

Ensuring that fire and EMS departments have adequate staffing to meet the emergency response and demands of local communities is critical. In rural areas, maintaining adequate staffing has a number of challenges. This includes the volunteer nature of the majority of departments and local economic conditions which can suppress the level of wages for all occupations including fire and EMS. Adequate staffing is a combination of retaining existing volunteers and recruiting new volunteers to fill the vacancies created by an aging fire and EMS workforce.

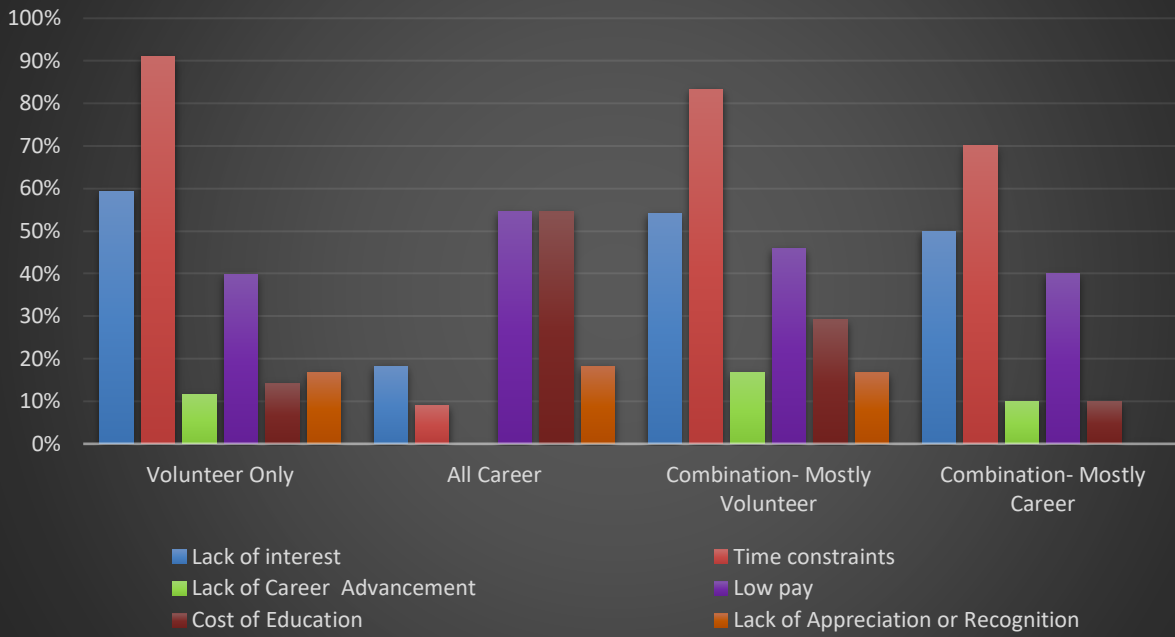


Perspectives on Personnel Needs

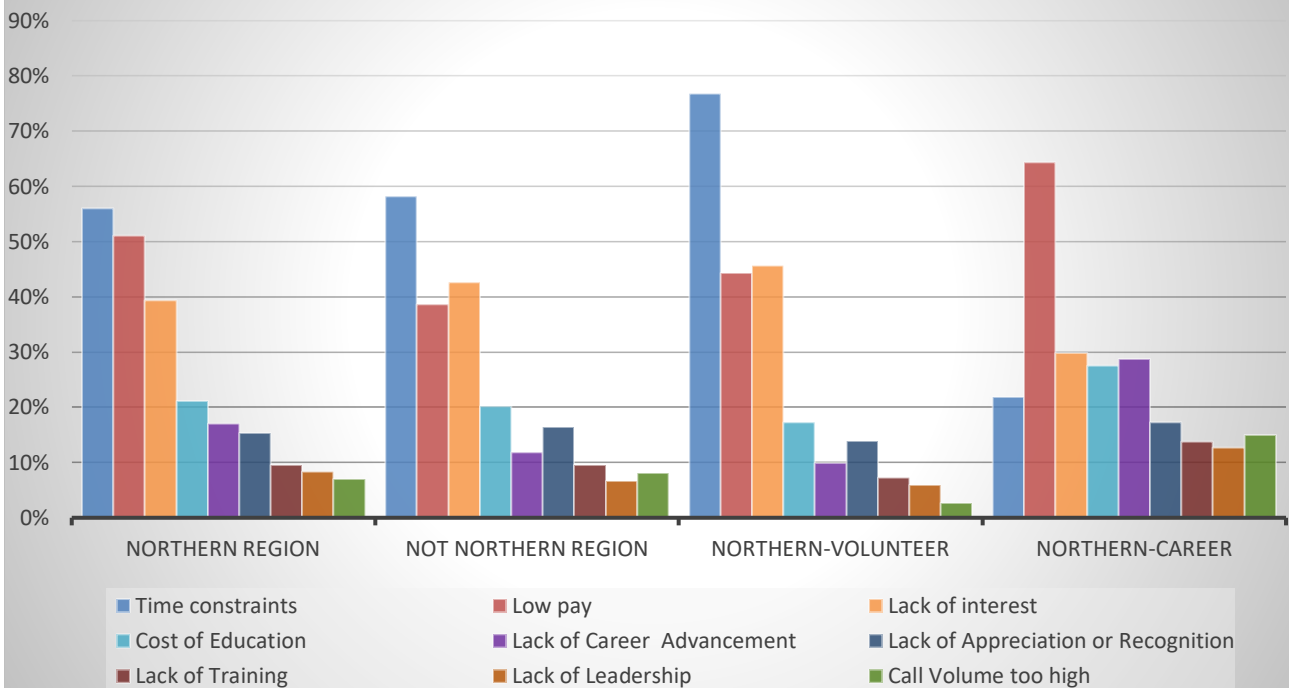
Questions regarding the extent recruitment and retention are a problem and contributing factors were asked on both the Department Profile Survey (charts with dark grey background) and the First Responder Survey (charts with light grey background). A comparison shows that in some areas, there were differences between the department profiles which were completed by management and the surveys which included both field personnel and management. There were also variations by region, age, and type of department.



Northern Region: What do you think makes recruiting new people for your agency a challenge?



What do you think gets in the way of recruiting new staff for your agency?



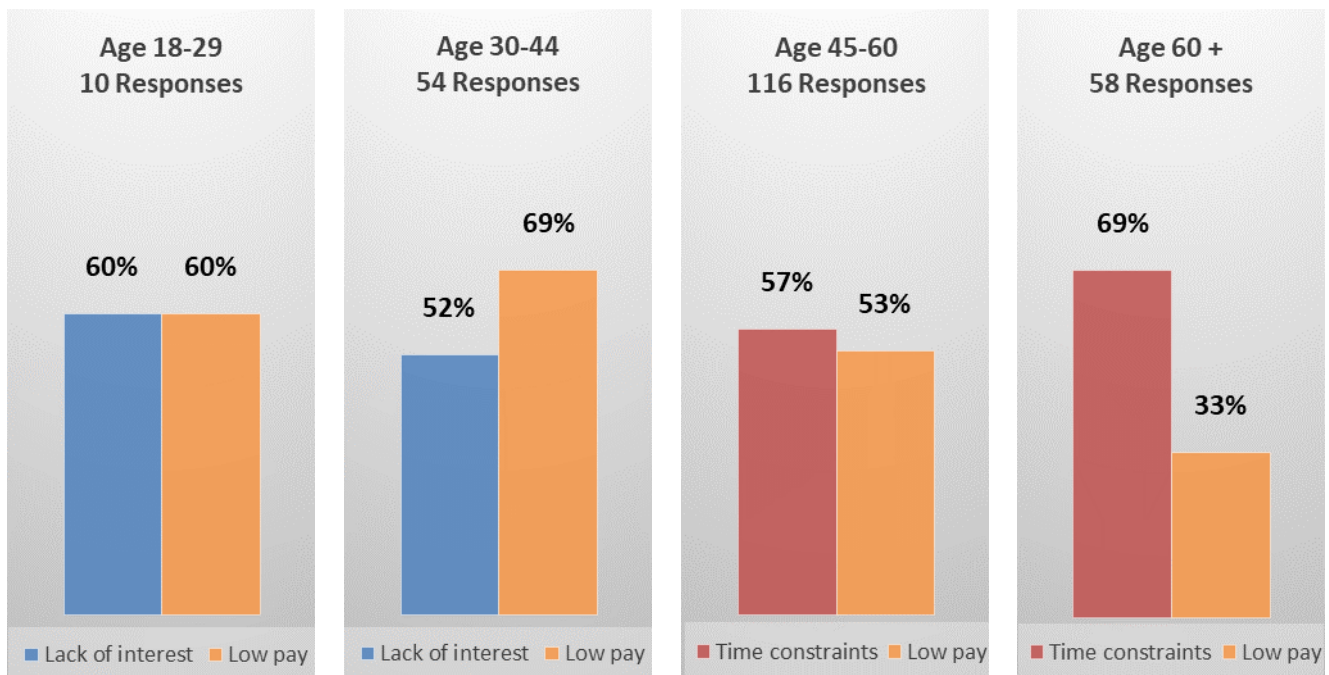
Northern Region-Other Comments

Coded Comments from Department profile	# of Responses
Training Requirements	27
Low Population	12
Time	6
Local Economy	5
Lack of Volunteer Mindset	4
Lack of Trained Applicants	2
Local Politics	2
Low Reimbursement	2
Younger Mindset	2
Burn out, Career Advancement in other Professions, Low Pay, Recruitment Efforts Limited, Regulations, Remote location, Seasonal Population, Testing Requirements	1 of each responses

Coded Comments from First Responder Survey	# of Responses
Training Requirements	19
Low Population-High Senior Population	8
Less Interest	5
Local Economy	4
Location	4
Testing	4
Time	4
Job Duties	3
Lack of Applicants	3
Lack of Awareness of problem	3
Long Transfers	3
Management	3
Funding	2
Poor Pay-Benefits	2
Lack of RNs, Lack of support from governing body, low volume, Substance Use Disorders, Unequal Work Assignments, Union	1 of each responses

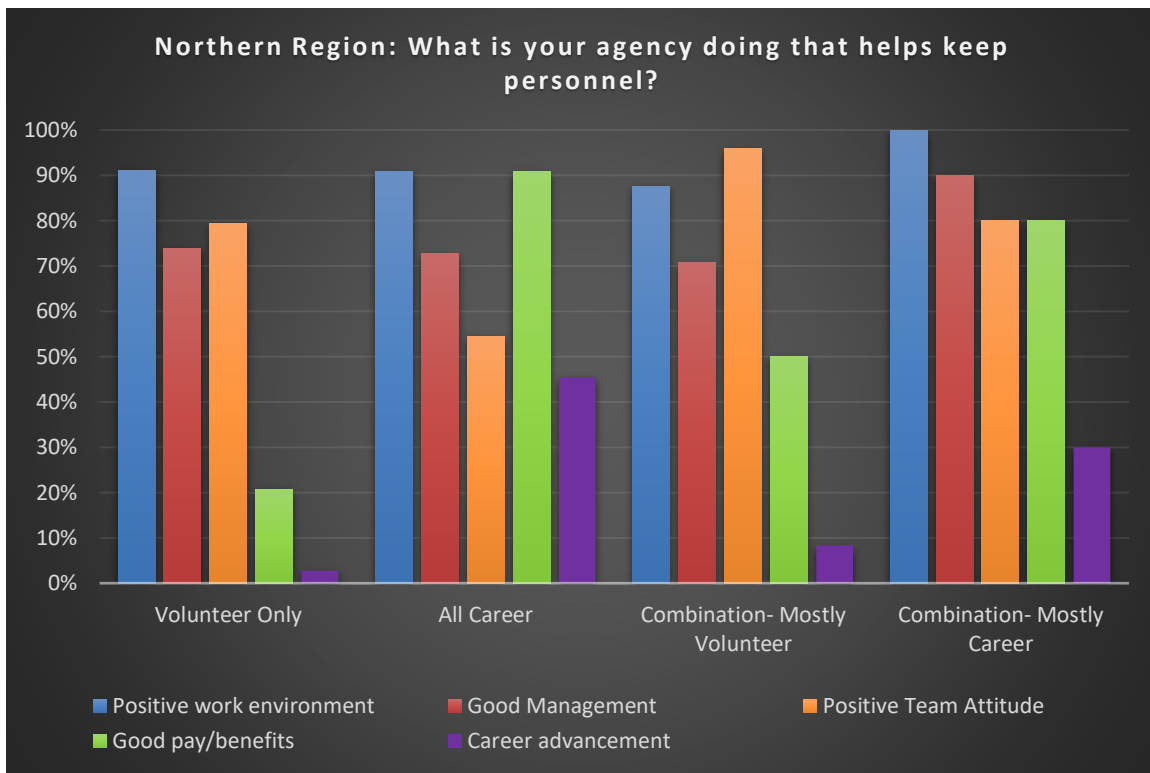
In both the Department Profiles and First Responder Surveys, the top two issues identified were training requirements and a changing population.

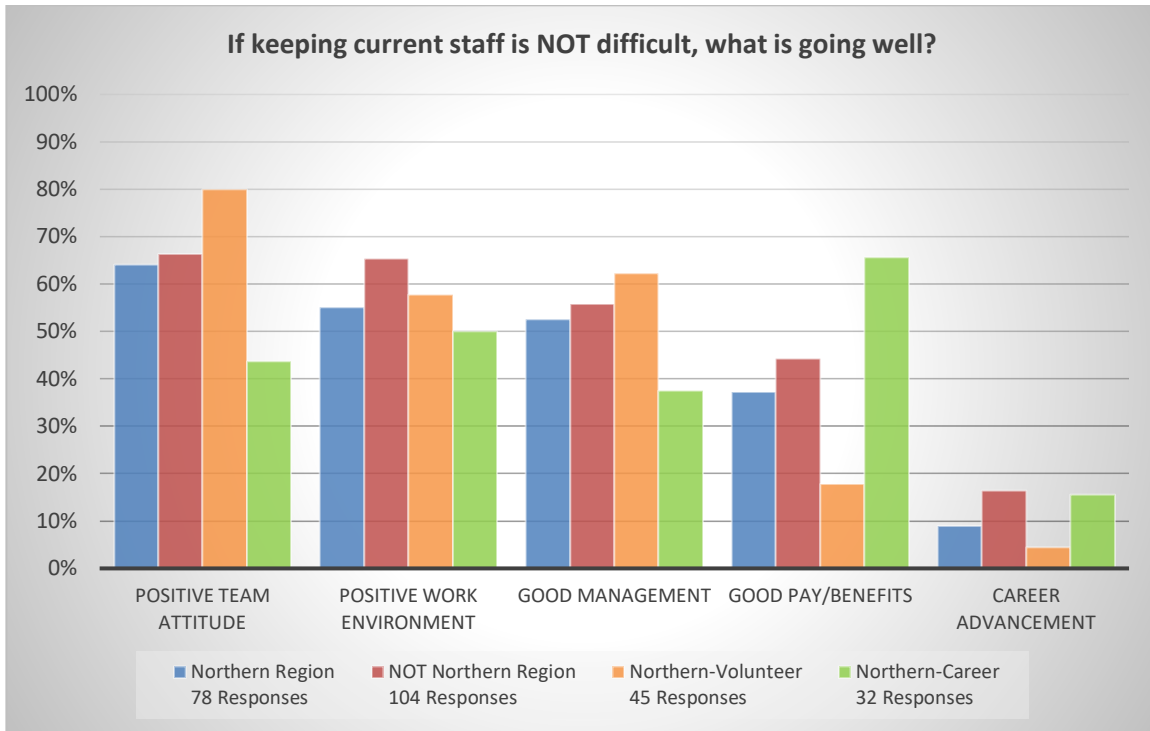
Northern Region: Top two recruitment challenges by age of respondents



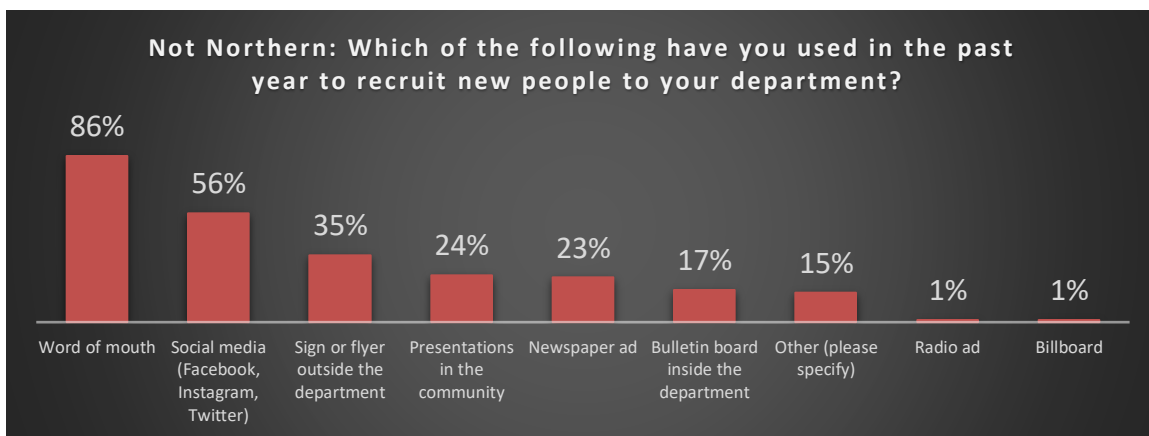
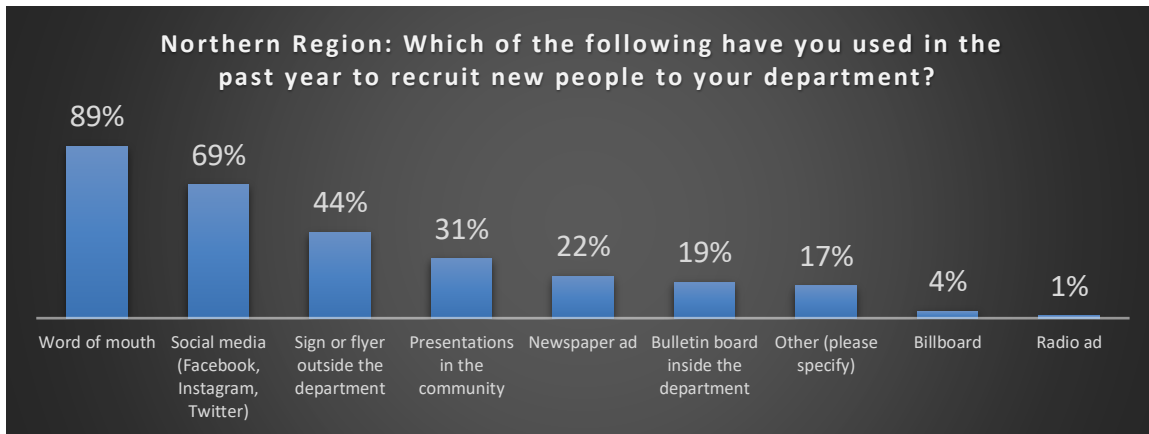
Current Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Department Profiles assessed current efforts regarding recruitment and retention of personnel. Departments were asked to indicate the strategies they were utilizing, if they had a designated person to address recruitment and retention, and the number of hours devoted by this individual. Examples of additional efforts provided in comments included: Community Service-5, Retirement Plan-2, Training-2, Appreciation Dinner, Avoiding Burnout on Transfers, Change in Management, Communication, Equipment, Family Participation, Gifts, Growth Opportunities, Monitor Attitudes, Positive environment, Reimbursement, Teamwork. Data was broken down by type of department.





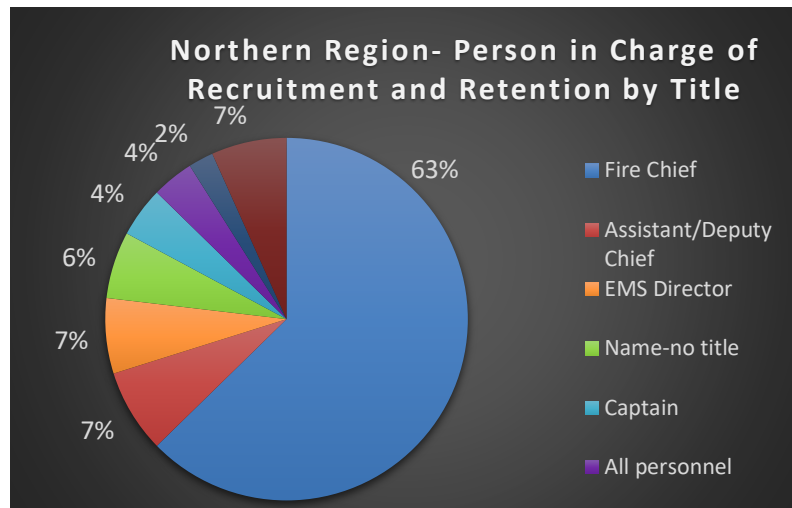
In addition to strategies for retention, recruitment strategies were also assessed and compared to the rest of the state.



Participants were provided an opportunity to provide additional strategies via an open ended comment section. Comments were coded with the following results by category.

Other comments	
Employment Websites	4
None	3
Mailer	2
National Volunteer Fire Council Web Presence	2
Newsletter	2
Business Partnerships, Clinical Contracts, Collaboration, Community Outreach, Community Visits, Company Website, Host Classes, Local Press, Online Recruiting Tool, Open House, Positive Press, Postcards And Flyers To Colleges, Township Led Sign, Township Meetings, Web Site, Yard Signs	1 response each

Additionally, departments indicated if they had an individual designated, the title of the individual, and number of hours dedicated to recruitment and retention. In the Northern Region, only 75% indicated that there was a person in charge of recruitment and retention efforts. Seventy-two percent of other participants on non-northern counties had named an individual. The number of hours dedicated to recruitment and retention varied from none to twenty hours per week. The table below indicates, of services in the Northern Region who named an individual, the hours dedicated each week. Only 16% of volunteer departments and 17% of career departments had 5 or more hours a week dedicated to recruitment and retention.



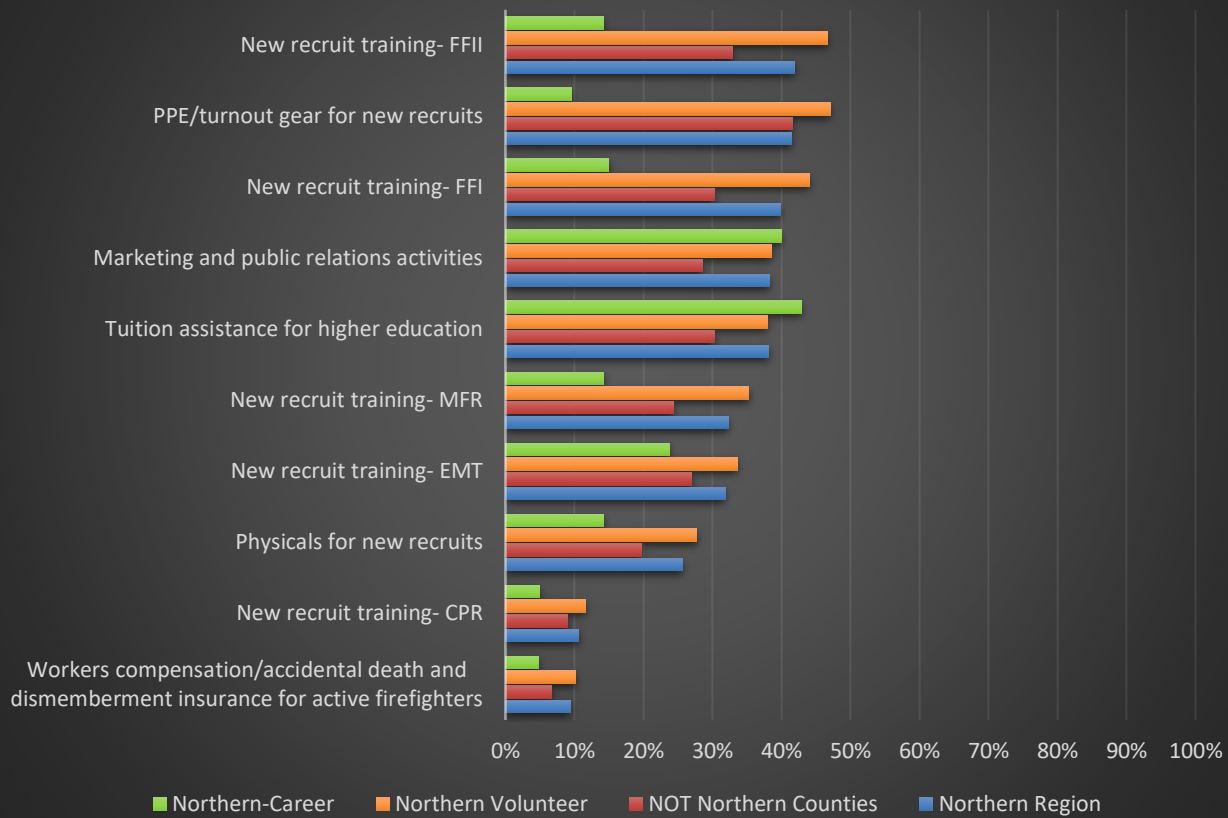
Only 16% of volunteer departments and 17% of career departments had 5 or more hours a week dedicated to recruitment and retention.

# of hours per week dedicated to recruitment and retention- Departments in Northern Michigan indicating a dedicated person.	Only or Mostly Volunteer (102 Responses)	Only or Mostly Career (18 Responses)
10-20 hours	5%	6%
5-9 hours	11%	11%
1-4 hours	59%	67%
0 hours	10%	6%
As needed, unknown, varies, not designated	16%	11%

Departments were also asked to expand on the nature of recruitment and retention challenges and adding personnel to their department. On a scale of 1- Low to 4-High, they rated 12 specific personnel challenges. There were differences between both the types of departments and between the Northern Region and other counties. Participants also provided suggestions for strategies in an open ended comment section.



% indicating Major or Moderate Challenge to Recruitment and Retention of Personnel



Training and Education

In order to ensure that efforts to building a stable workforce, understanding training capacity and interest is important. Both the Department Profile (dark grey background on charts) and First Responder Survey (light grey background on charts) assessed current levels of training and interest in training. Questions were included for both fire and EMS related certifications.

Please indicate the number of personnel with the following training.

Answer Choices	Northern Volunteer/Mostly Volunteer			Northern Career/Mostly Career			
	Average Number	Total Number	Responses	Average Number	Total Number	Responses	
Firefighter 1	13.1	1672	87% 128	25.4	305	71% 12	
Firefighter 2	15.0	2166	98% 144	24.2	412	100% 17	
Fire Officer 1	3.8	436	79% 116	10.7	128	71% 12	
Fire Officer 2	3.5	383	75% 110	11.6	128	65% 11	
Fire Officer 3	2.5	263	73% 107	10.5	137	76% 13	
			Answered 147			Answered 17	
			Skipped 3			Skipped 4	



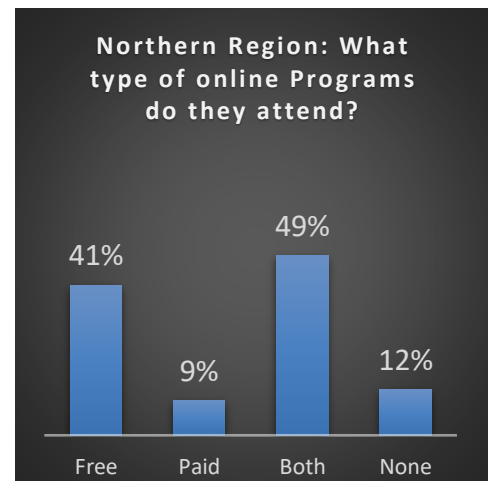
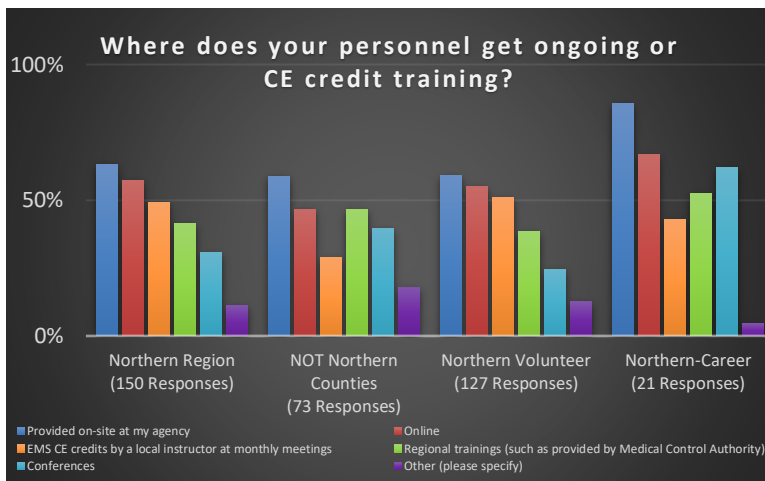
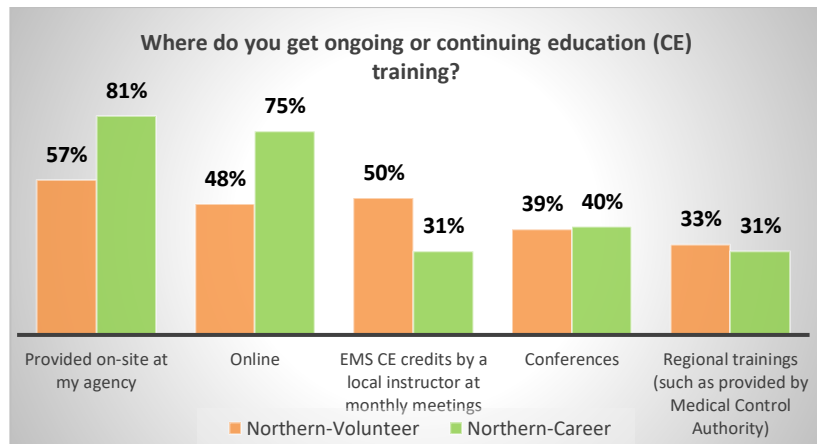
Please indicate the number of personnel with the following training.

Answer Choices	Northern- All Respondents			
	Average Number	Total Number	Responses	
Hazmat Awareness	16.2	2302	87.12%	142
Hazmat Operations	13.7	2062	92.64%	151
Hazmat Technician	0.9	102	66.87%	109
			Answered	163
			Skipped	10

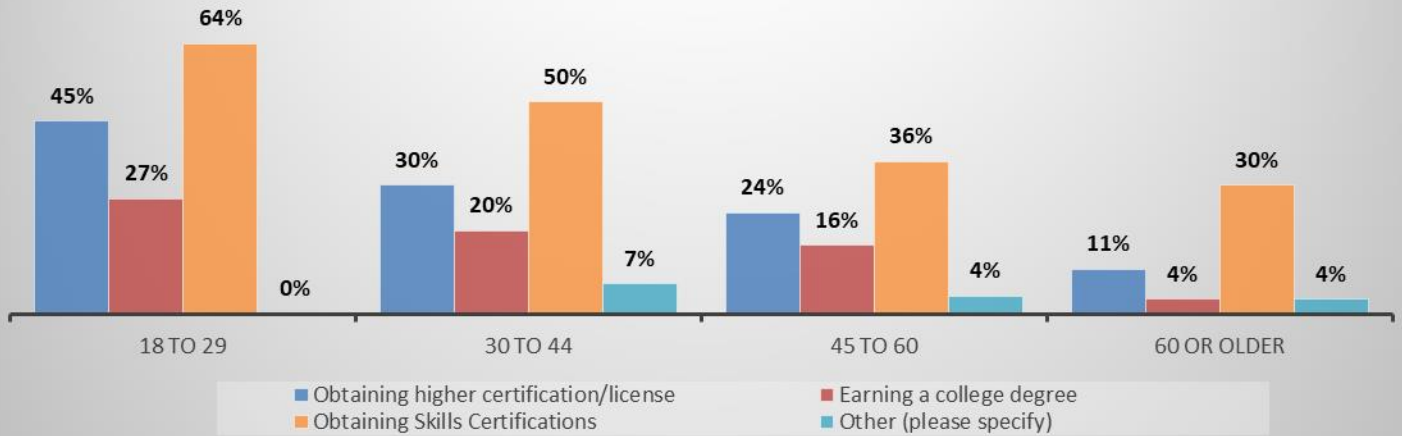
Please indicate the number of personnel with the following training.

Answer Choices	Northern Volunteer/Mostly Volunteer				Northern Career/Mostly Career			
	Average Number	Total Number	Responses		Average Number	Total Number	Responses	
MFR (Medical First Responder)	4.8	678	97%	141	1.9	28	71%	15
EMT (Emergency Medical Technician)	3.8	545	99%	143	14.8	310	100%	21
Advanced-EMT	0.3	23	54%	79	1.7	17	48%	10
EMT-P (Paramedic)	1.4	172	83%	120	13.0	260	95%	20
EMS IC (Instructor Coordinator)	0.5	48	68%	98	3.5	53	71%	15
			Answered	145			Answered	21
			Skipped	5			Skipped	0

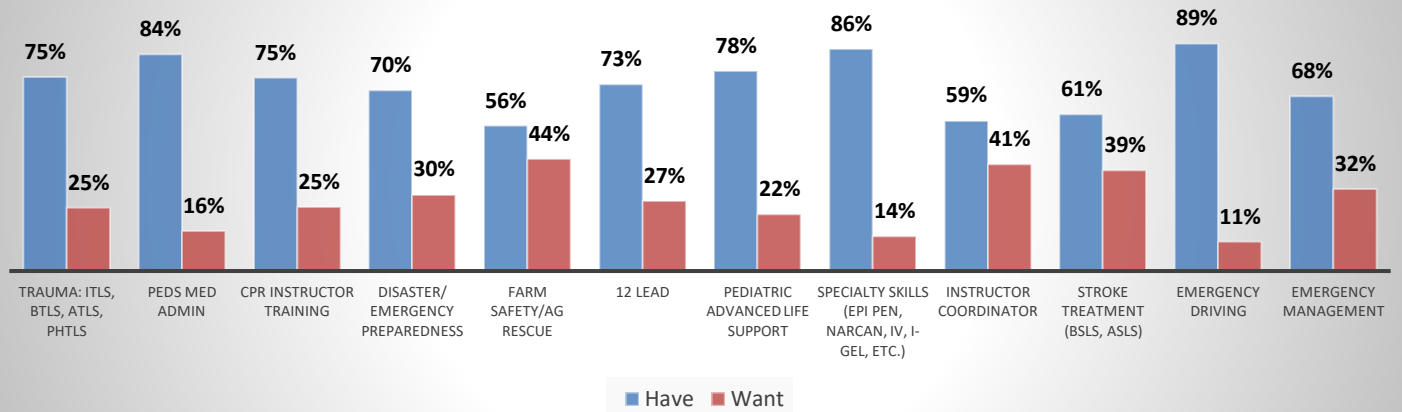
Understanding the patterns for accessing continuing education and current interests of personnel, is important to ensuring that current and future personnel are well trained and able to meet emerging needs.



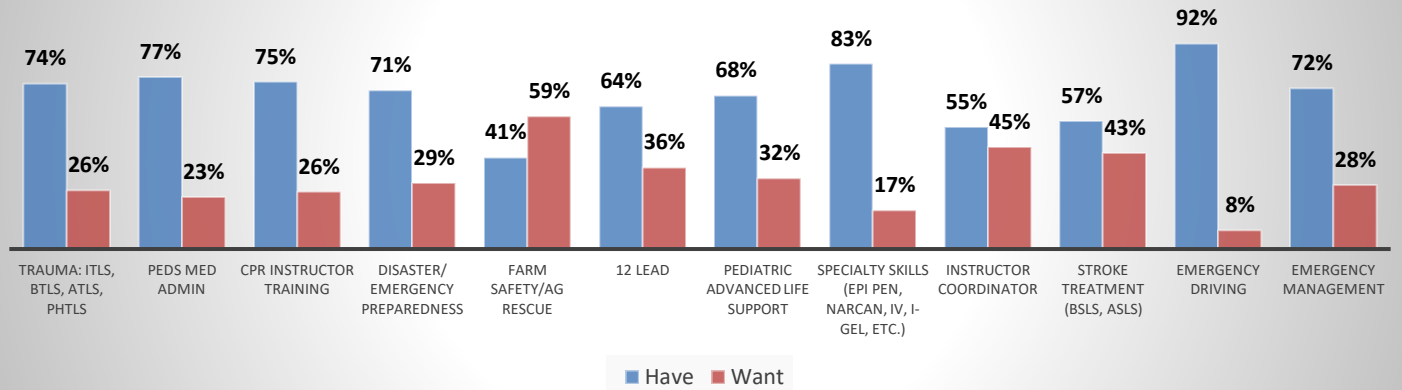
Northern Region: Interest in Training by Age

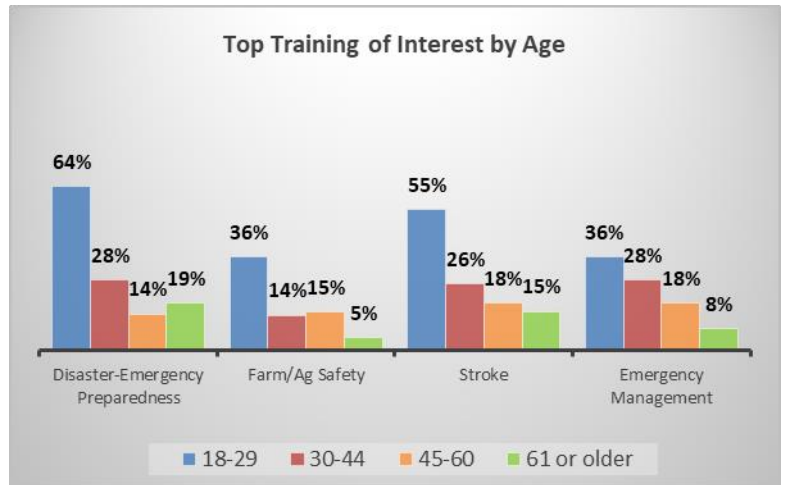
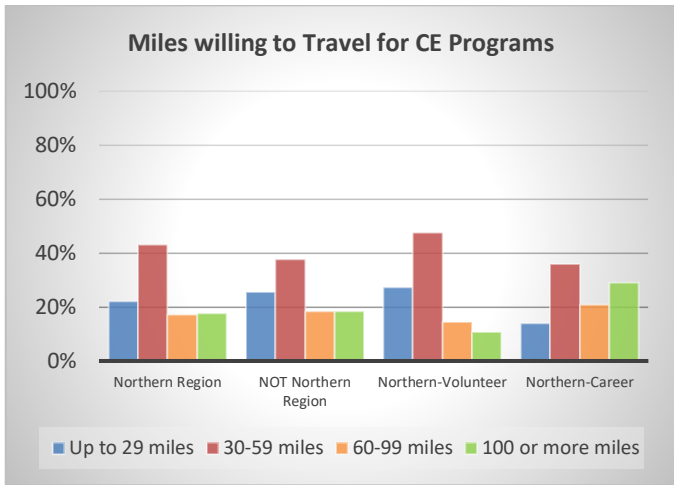


Northern Region: Please indicate any supplemental EMS training you've had or would be interested.

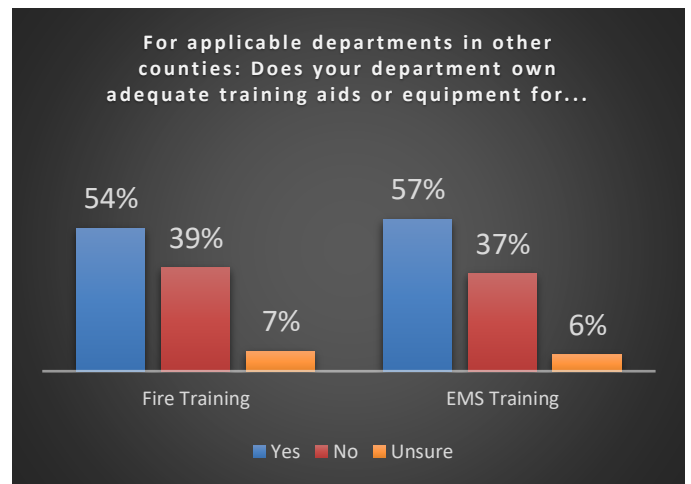
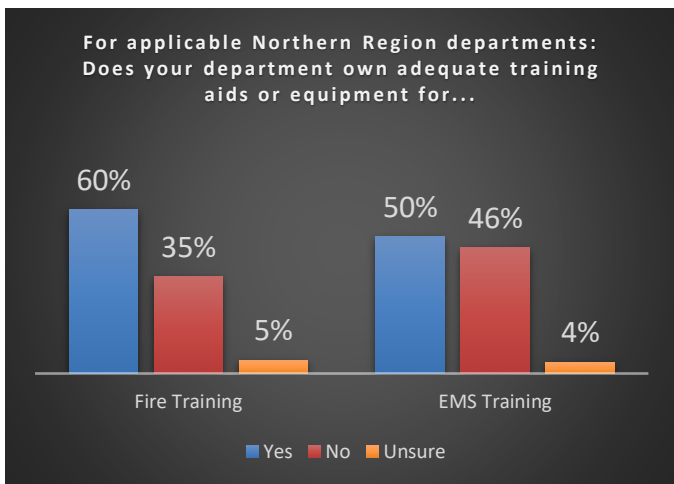
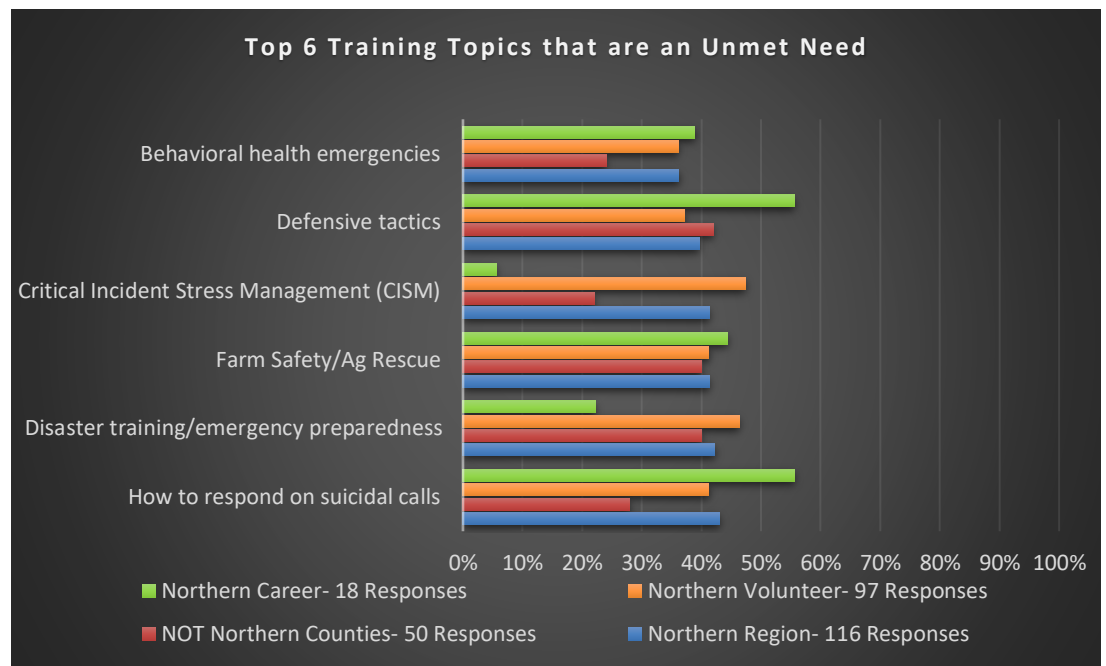


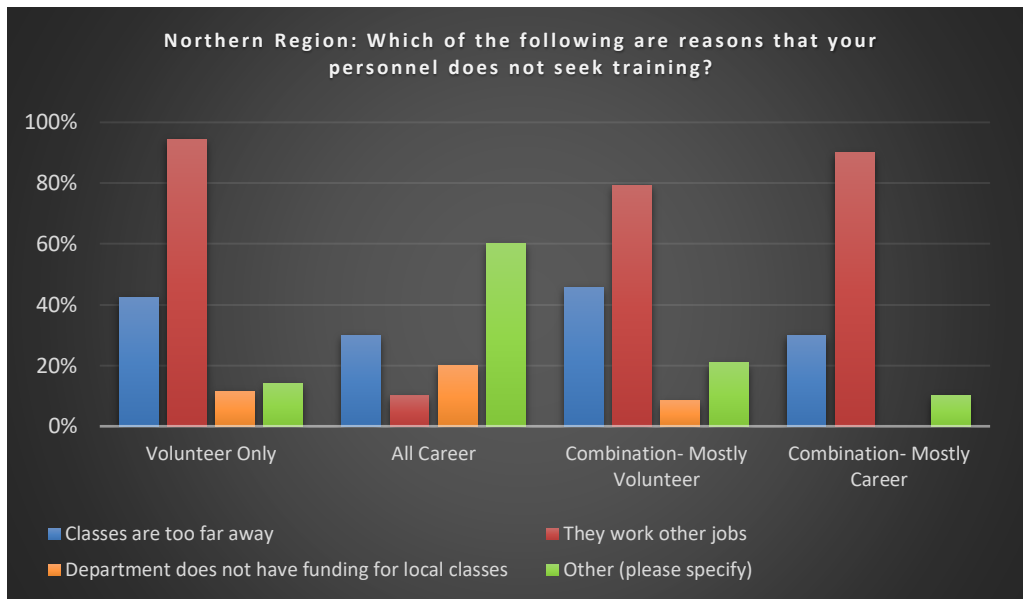
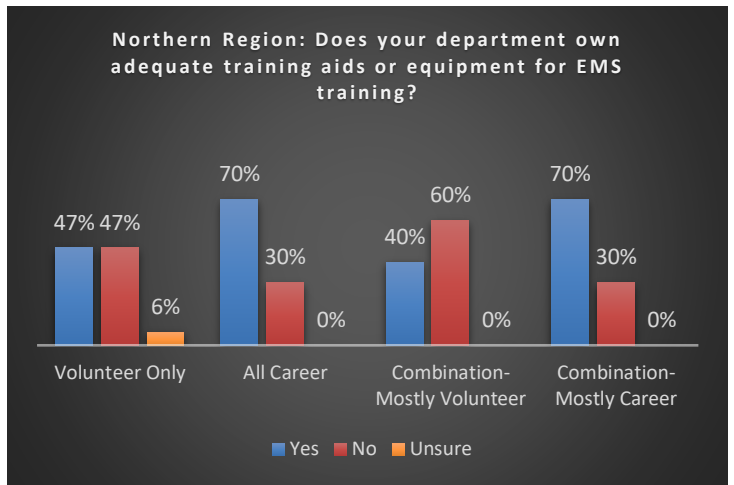
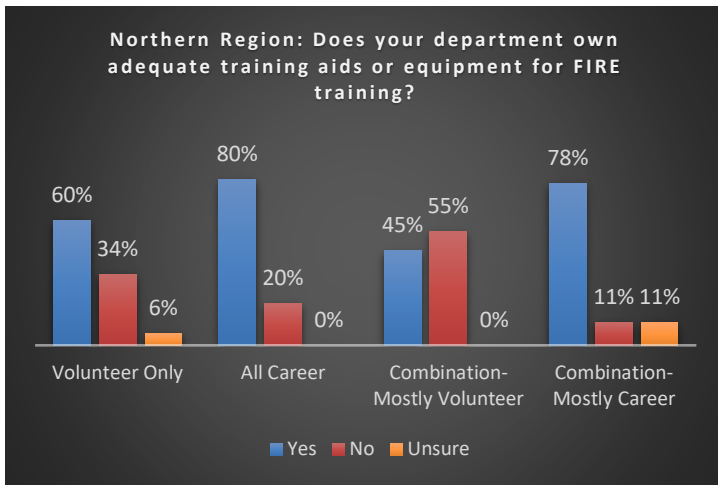
Not Northern Counties: Please indicate any supplemental EMS training you've had or would be interested.





Meeting training needs is a challenge for many departments and first responders. Some of those challenges include travel, availability of Instructor Coordinators, and costs. Both department profiles and first responder surveys indicated training as a challenge.





In the Northern Region, 75% of departments indicated they had a person designated to coordinate training.

Title of Person Responsible for Training	#	%
Fire Chief	35	27%
Training Coordinator	33	26%
Assistant/Deputy Chief	19	15%
Captain	19	15%
Name-no title	7	5%
EMS Director	6	5%
Officer	5	4%
Battalion Chief	1	1%
Chiefs' Association	1	1%
Committee	1	1%
President	1	1%
Supervisor	1	1%
Total Responses	129	

# of hours per week dedicated to training for Departments in Northern Michigan indicating having an individual designated to coordinating training.	Only or Mostly Volunteer (90 Responses)	Only or Mostly Career (18 Responses)
10-20 hours	4%	33%
5-9 hours	12%	11%
1-4 hours	67%	50%
0 hours	2%	0%
As needed, unknown, varies, not designated	14%	6%

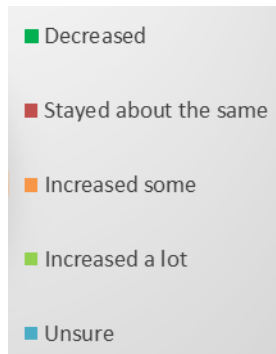


Impact of Mental Health and Substance Use Disorders

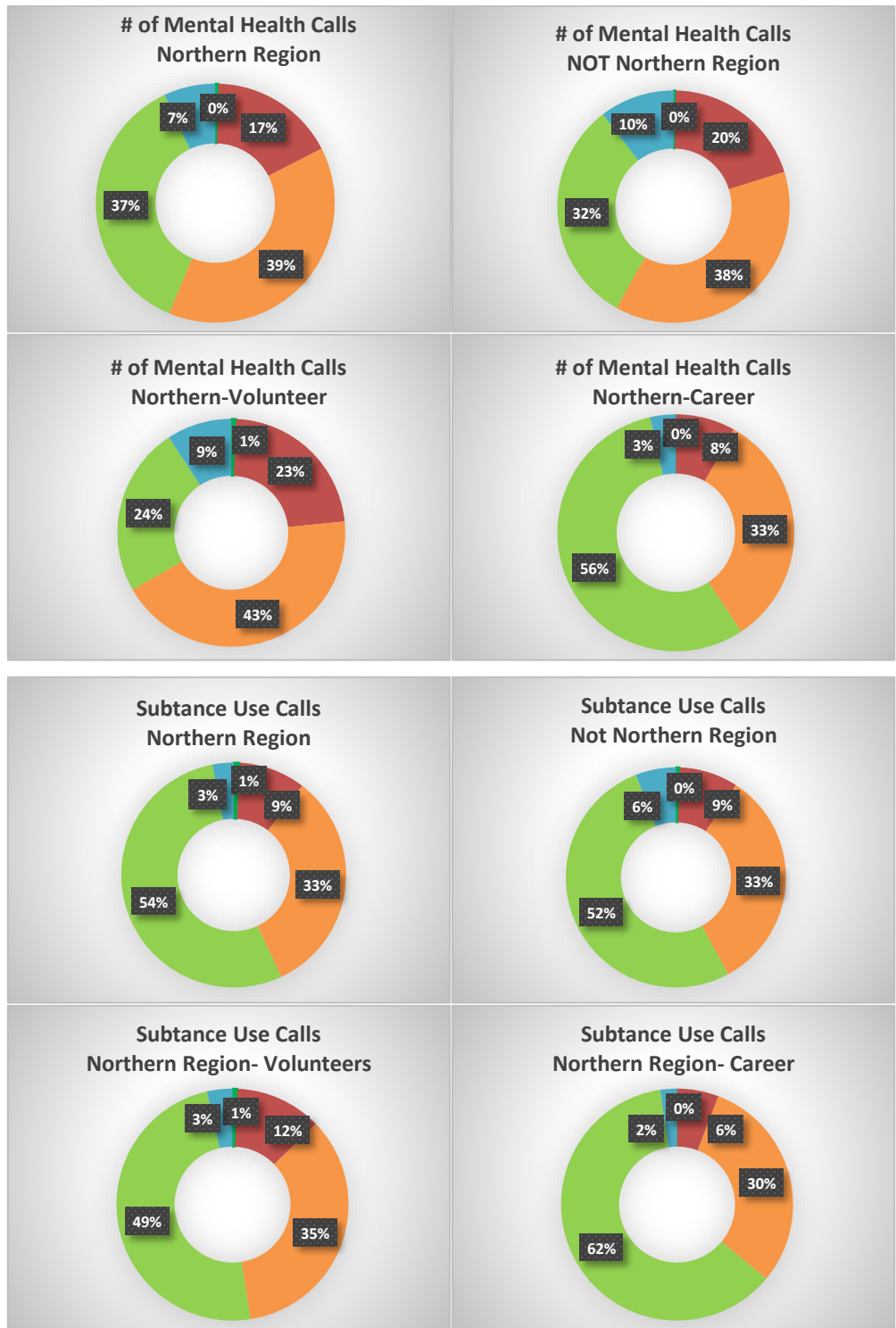
Suicide rate and the opioid epidemic in northern Michigan raise questions about these health indicators may be impacting emergency departments. A surge in community needs in one area can create strain for fire and EMS departments, especially those that already face personnel challenges. This can have a detriment to recruitment and retention of personnel and volunteers.

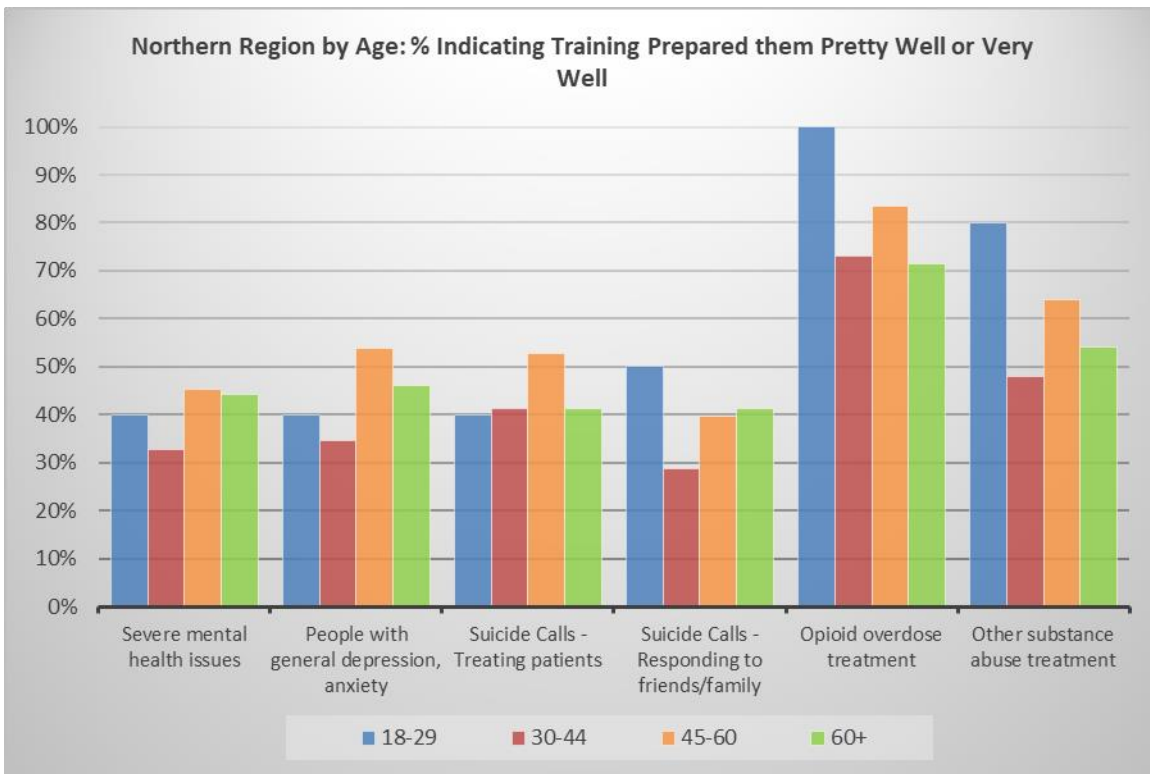
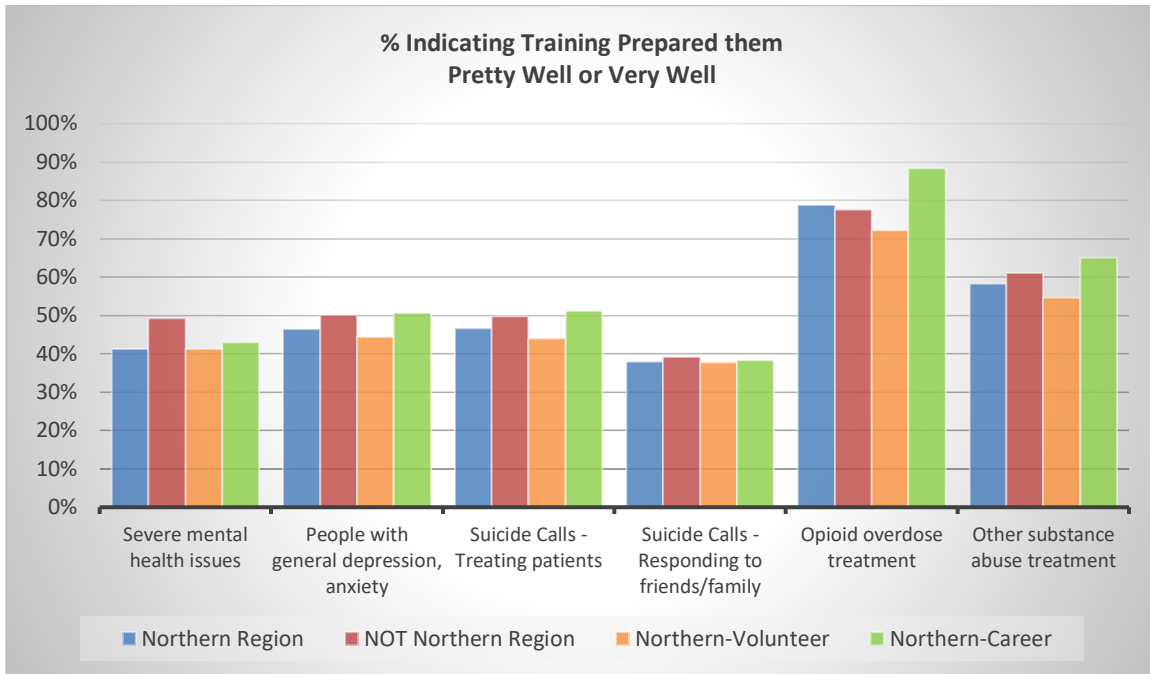
Perceptions of Need

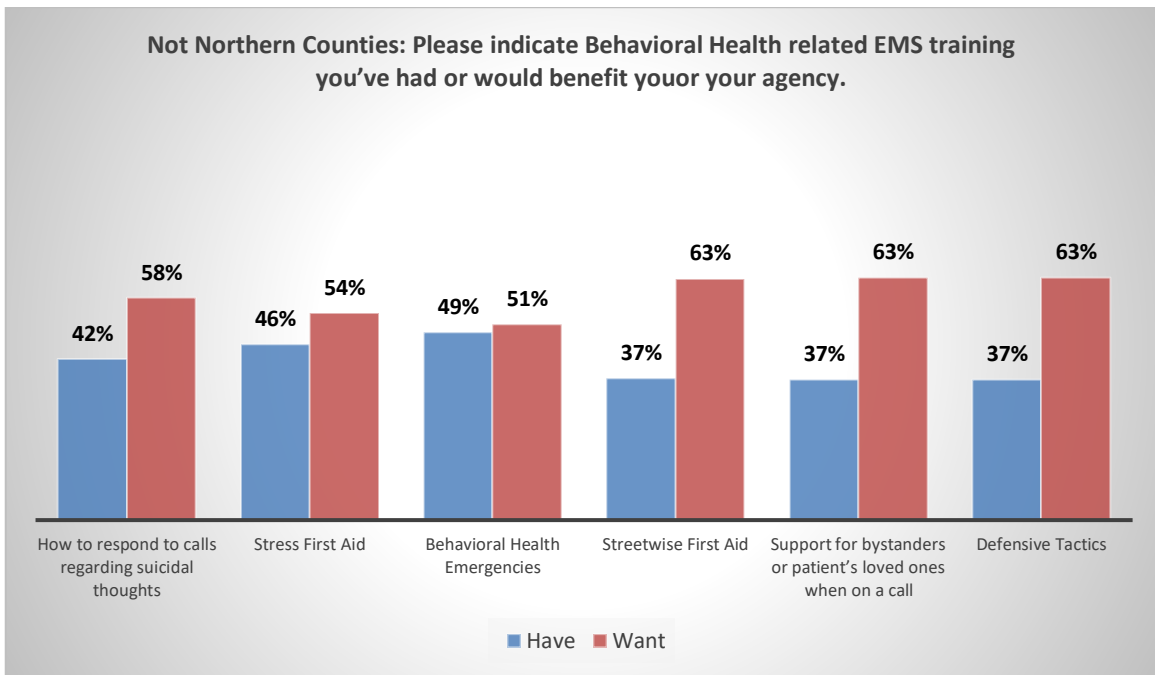
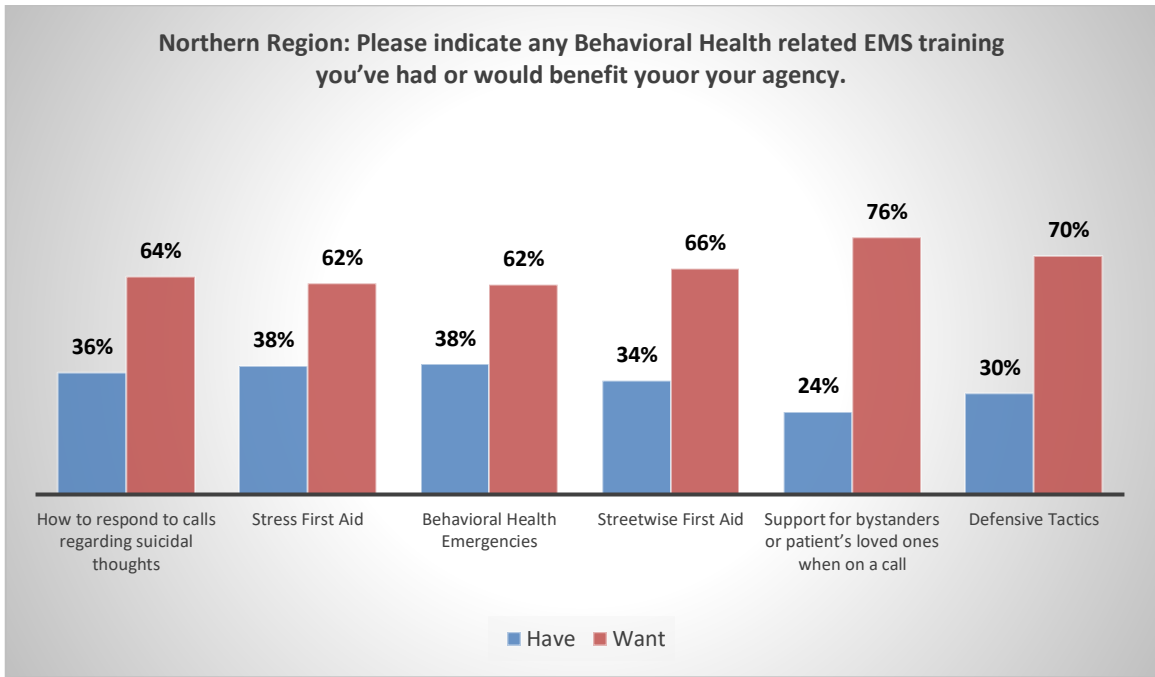
In your opinion, in recent years, has the number of mental health related calls has...



In your opinion, in recent years, has the number of substance use related calls has...



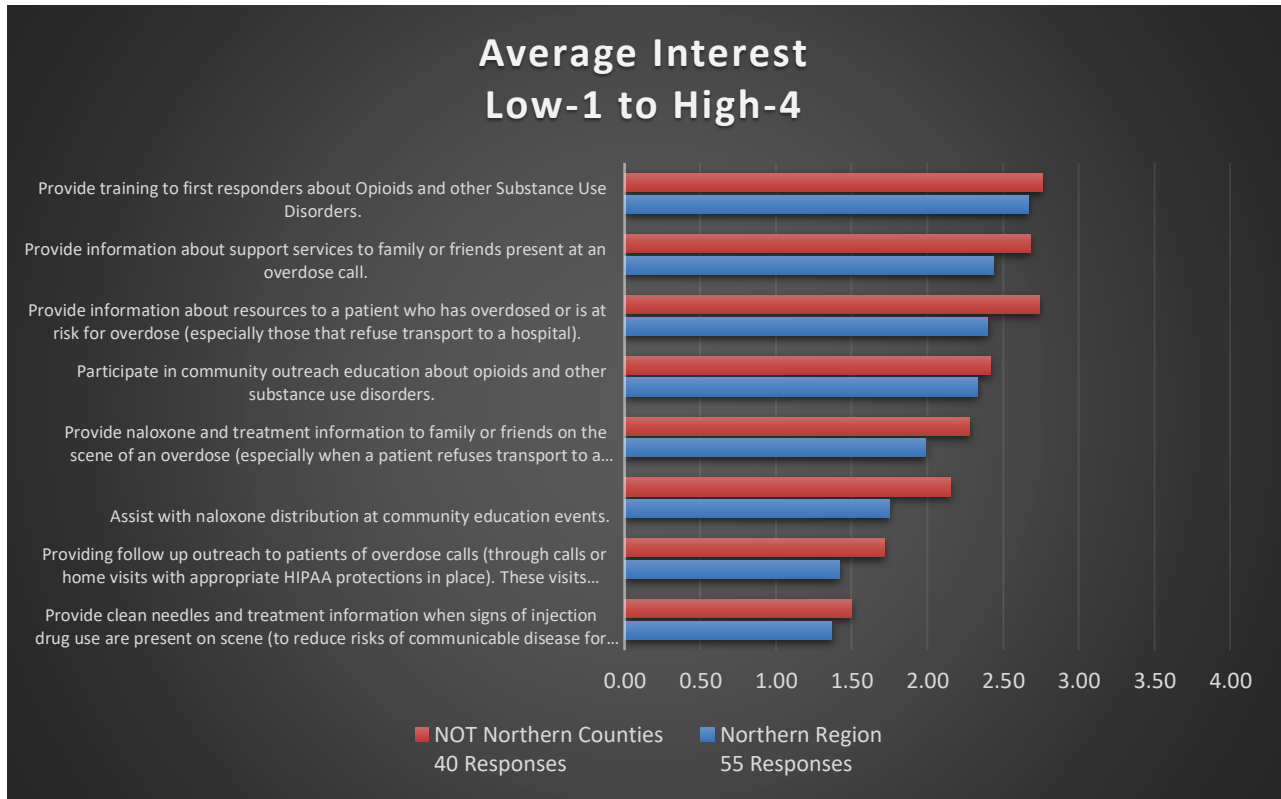




The opioid epidemic has critically impacted the Northern Region of the lower peninsula of Michigan. The role of emergency departments in addressing this important issue is emerging. A few weeks after launching the department profiles, it became apparent that questions regarding opioid interventions would be helpful to the region. Questions were added to the online survey and a separate survey and link with only the opioid questions were sent to departments already having completed the survey. In total, 55 departments completed the opioid questions in the Northern Region and 44 in the Upper Peninsula. On a scale of 1 to 4, departments were asked about the degree of interest they have in pursuing a variety of strategies to address opioid use disorder.



How much would your department be interested in offering the following to combat opioids?

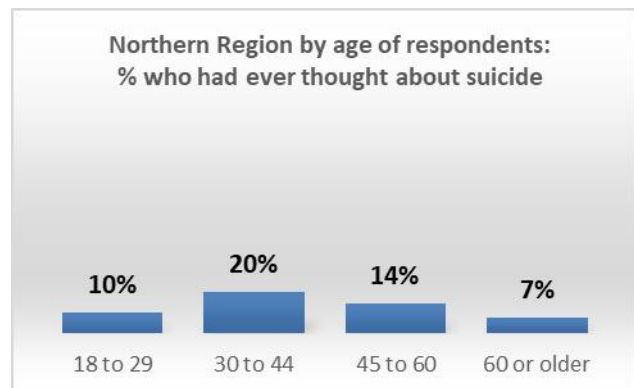
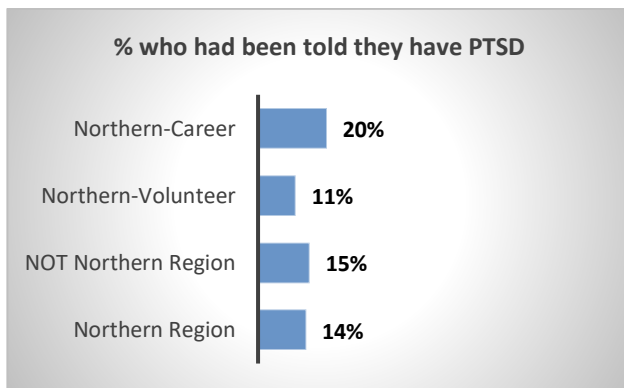


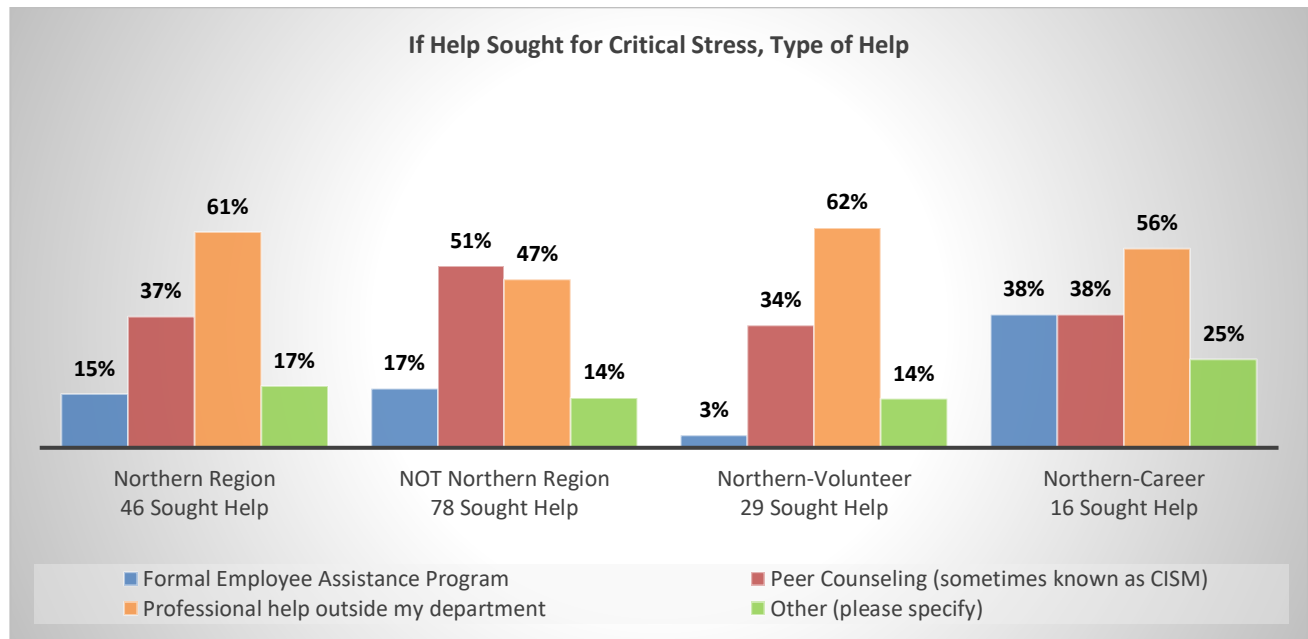
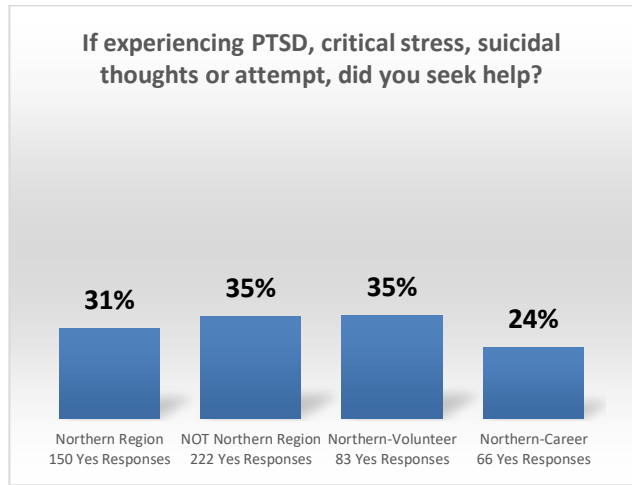
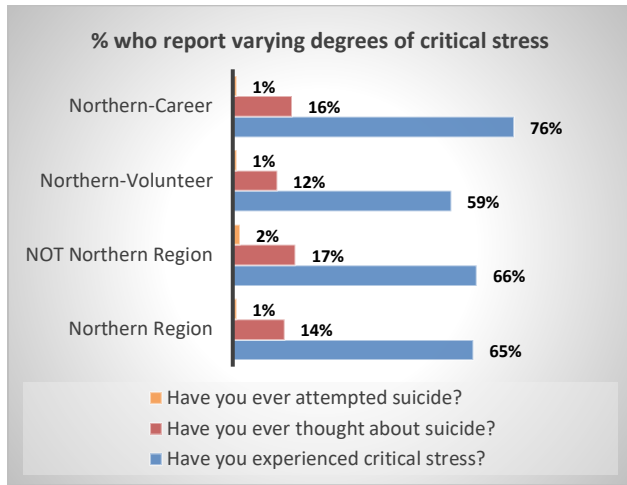
Critical Stress Among First Responders

Across the nation, leaders in emergency services have identified data that supports taking a closer look at Critical Stress among emergency providers. Questions were included on both the Department Profile and the First Responder Survey to assess experiences with critical stress, available support services, use of services, barriers to accessing services, and comfort level addressing critical stress.

“Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse are other long-overlooked health risks of firefighting. Nearly 100 firefighters commit suicide each year. That’s more than die annually in the line of duty.”

*Kimberly Quiros, Chief of Communications
National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)*



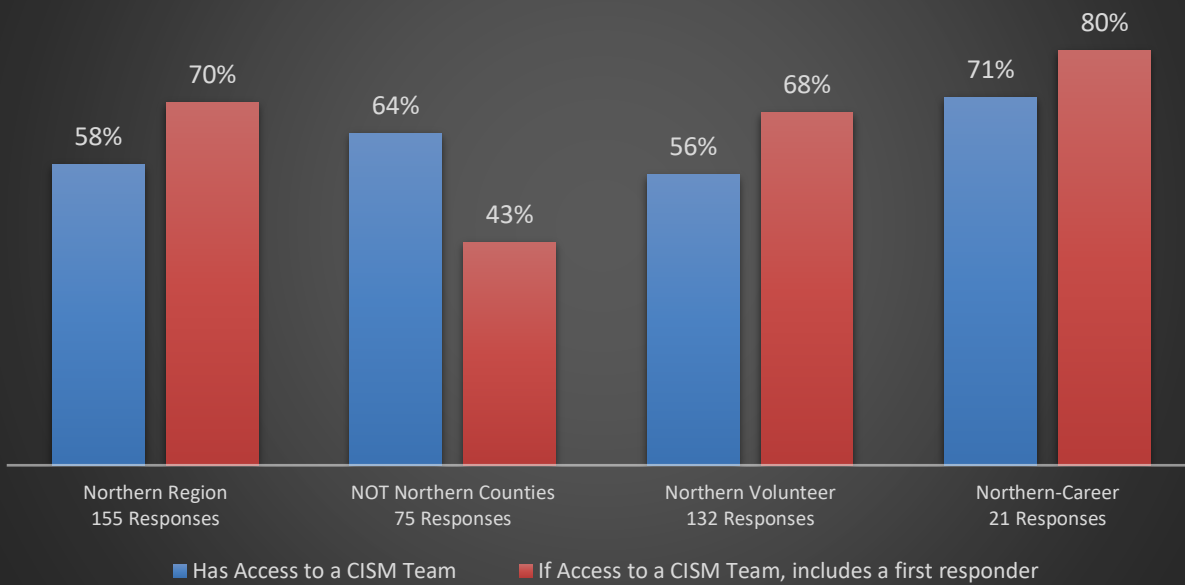


Other Comments- Northern Region

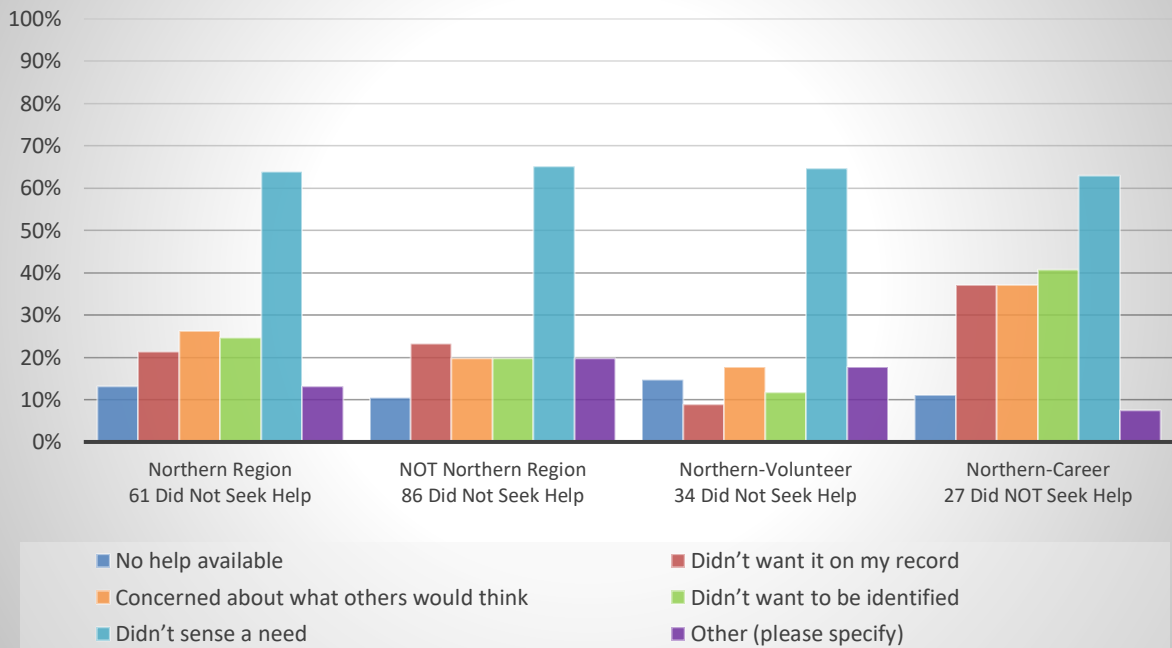
Bay county fire chaplain
 Departmental chaplain
 County Wide CISM is available
 Clare County Crisis Response Team
 Critical Incident Debriefing after certain incidents, rare
 Non really planned, mostly likely discussed one on one or in a small group setting.



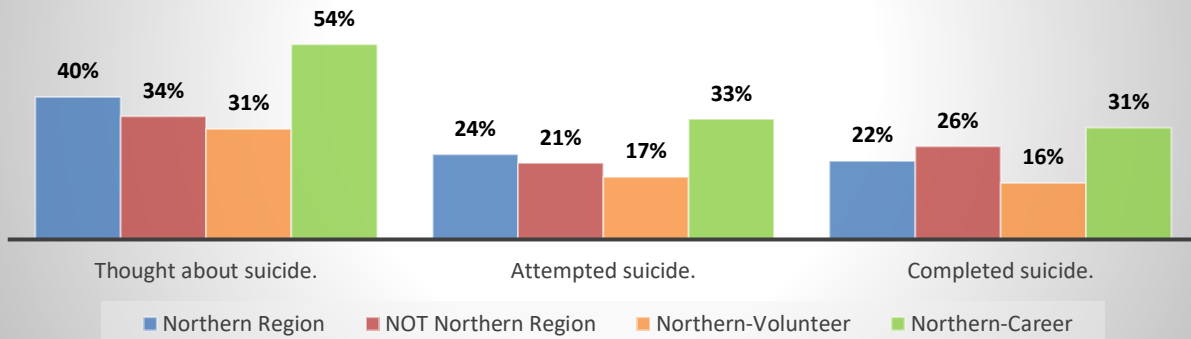
Nothern Region: Access to CISM Team



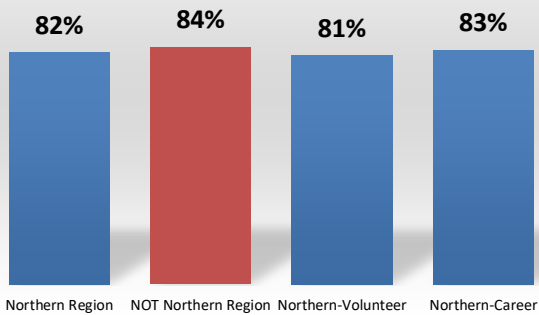
If you did not seek help, what prevented you for doing so?



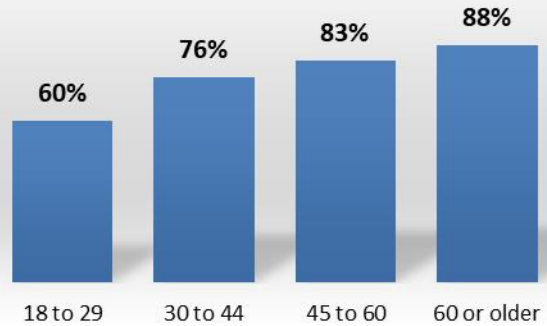
% who reported knowing a first responder that has...



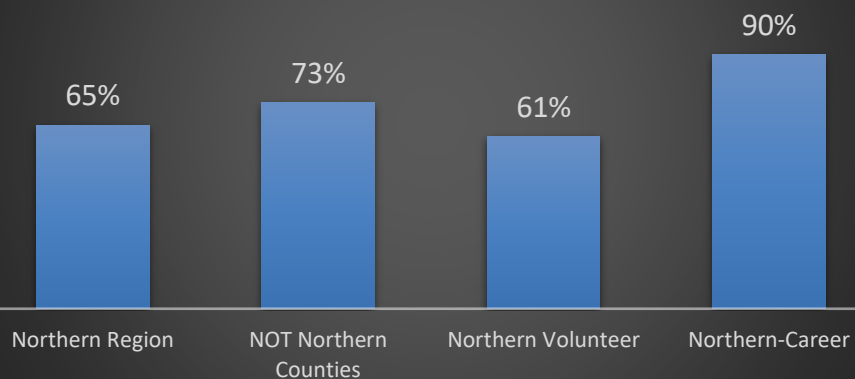
% who know what help is available or how to get help for critical stress or substance use disorders.



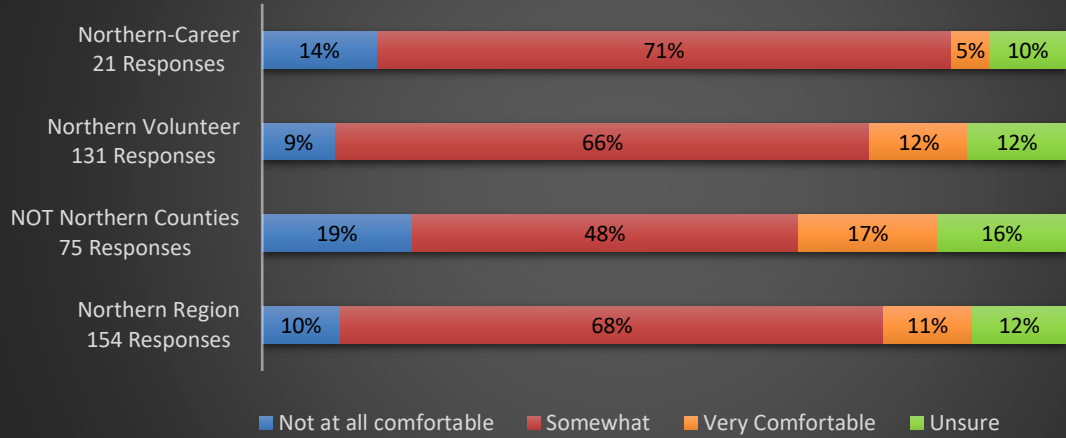
Northern Region by Age: % who know what help is available or how to get help for critical stress or substance use disorders.



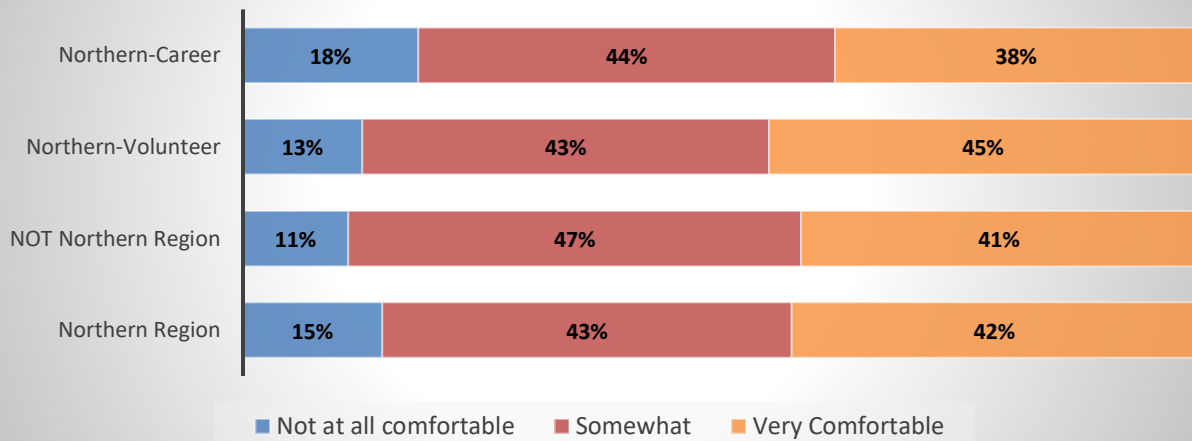
**If a fellow responder was experiencing critical stress, mental health, or a substance use disorder, would your personnel know what help is available?
Answer of Yes**



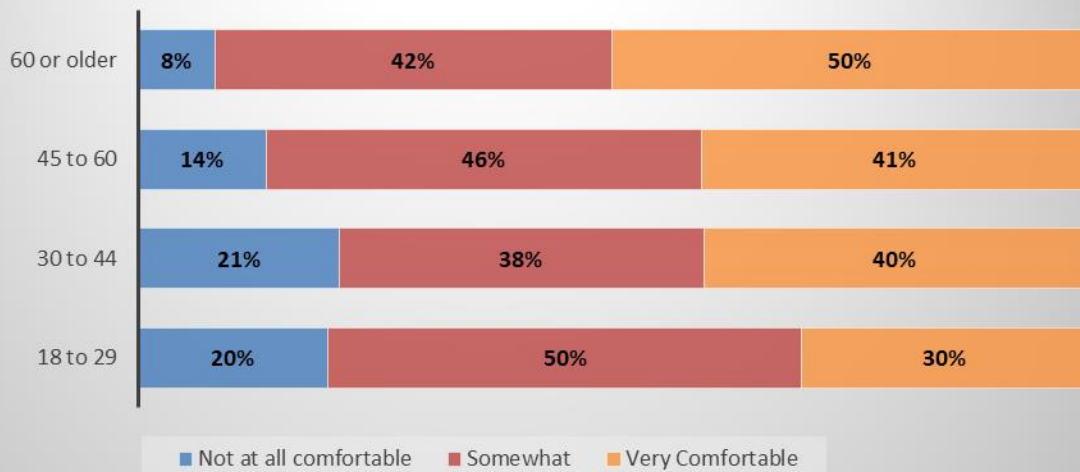
How comfortable would your personnel be asking for help for themselves?



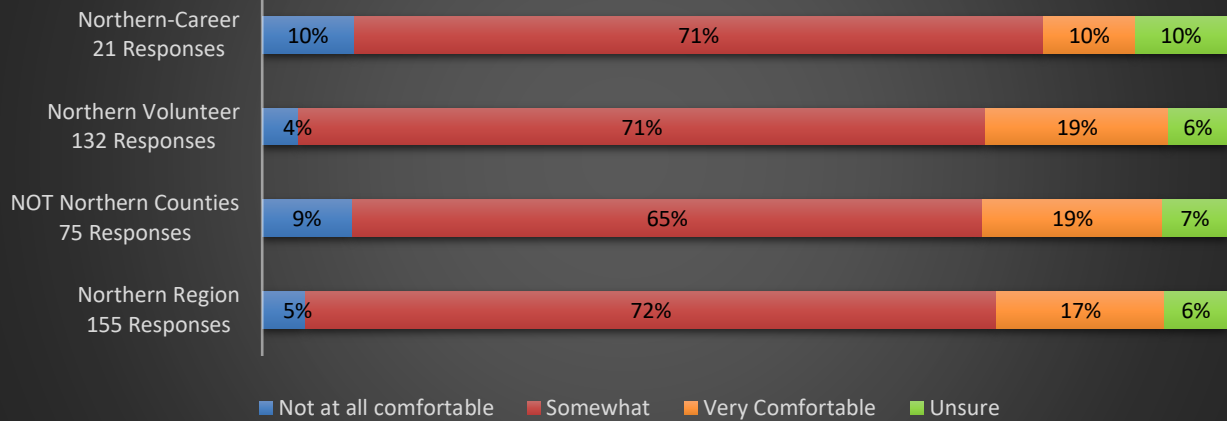
How comfortable are you asking for help for yourself?



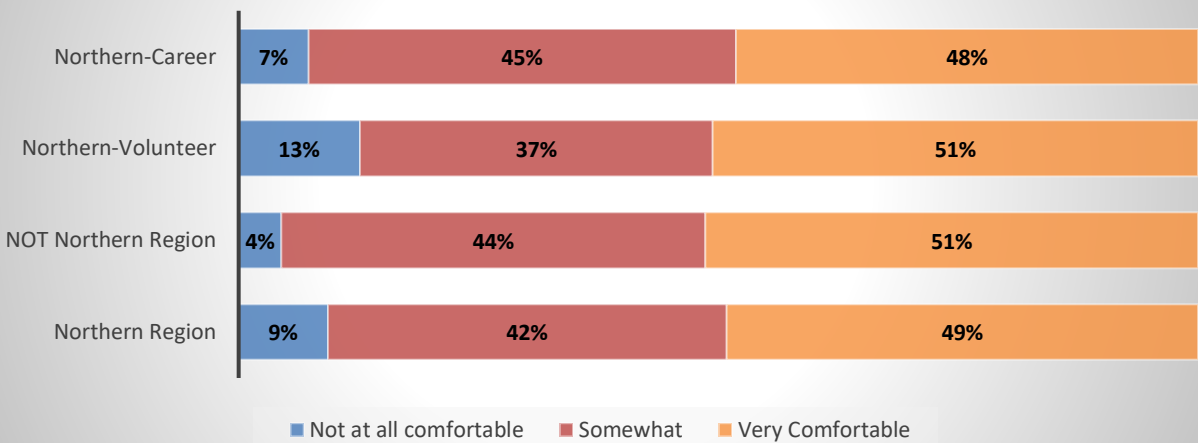
Northern Region by Age: How comfortable are you asking for help for yourself?



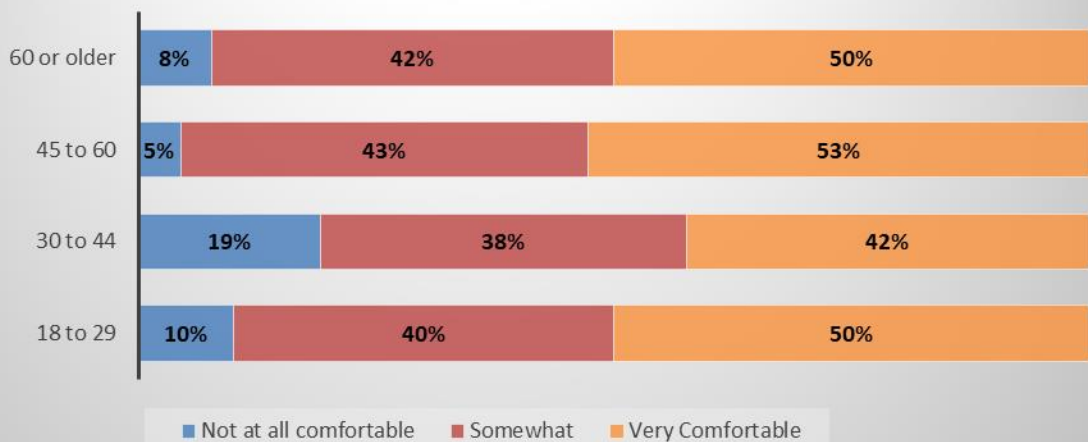
How comfortable would your personnel be addressing the critical stress with a fellow responder?



How comfortable are you talking about the issue with a fellow responder who might need help?

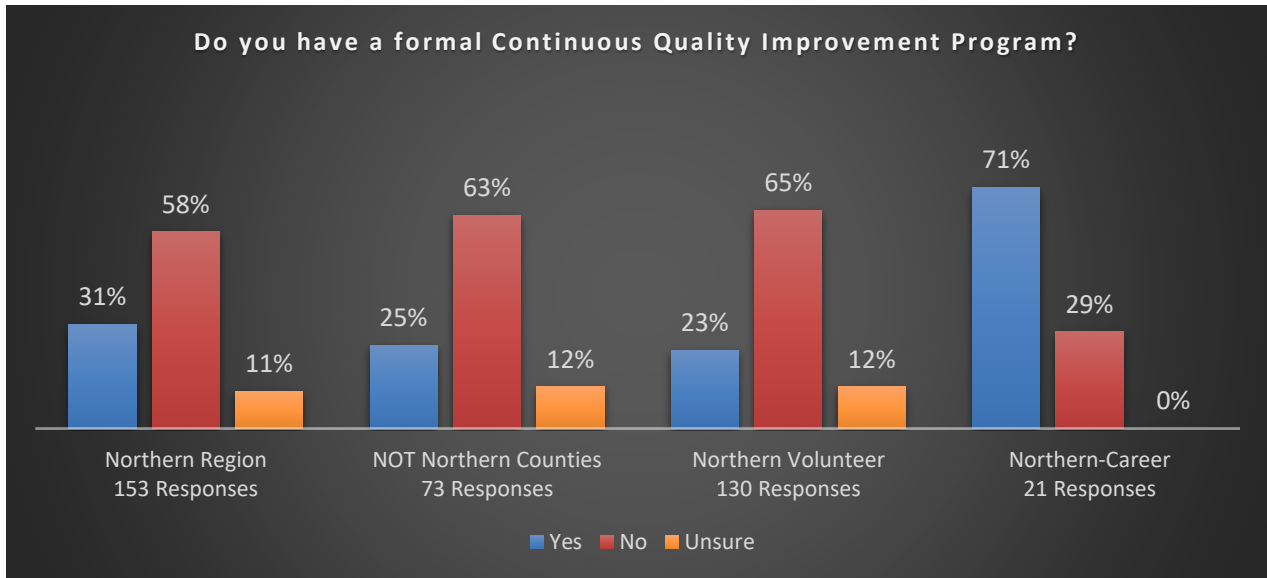


Northern Region by Age: How comfortable are you talking about the issue with a fellow responder who might need help?



Quality Assurance and Improvement

Many of the fire departments in the Northern Region are licensed EMS providers. Quality of Emergency Medical Services is highly dependent on well trained staff and adequate quality assurance processes. Often in rural, volunteer based departments, developing and maintaining a quality improvement process is a challenge.



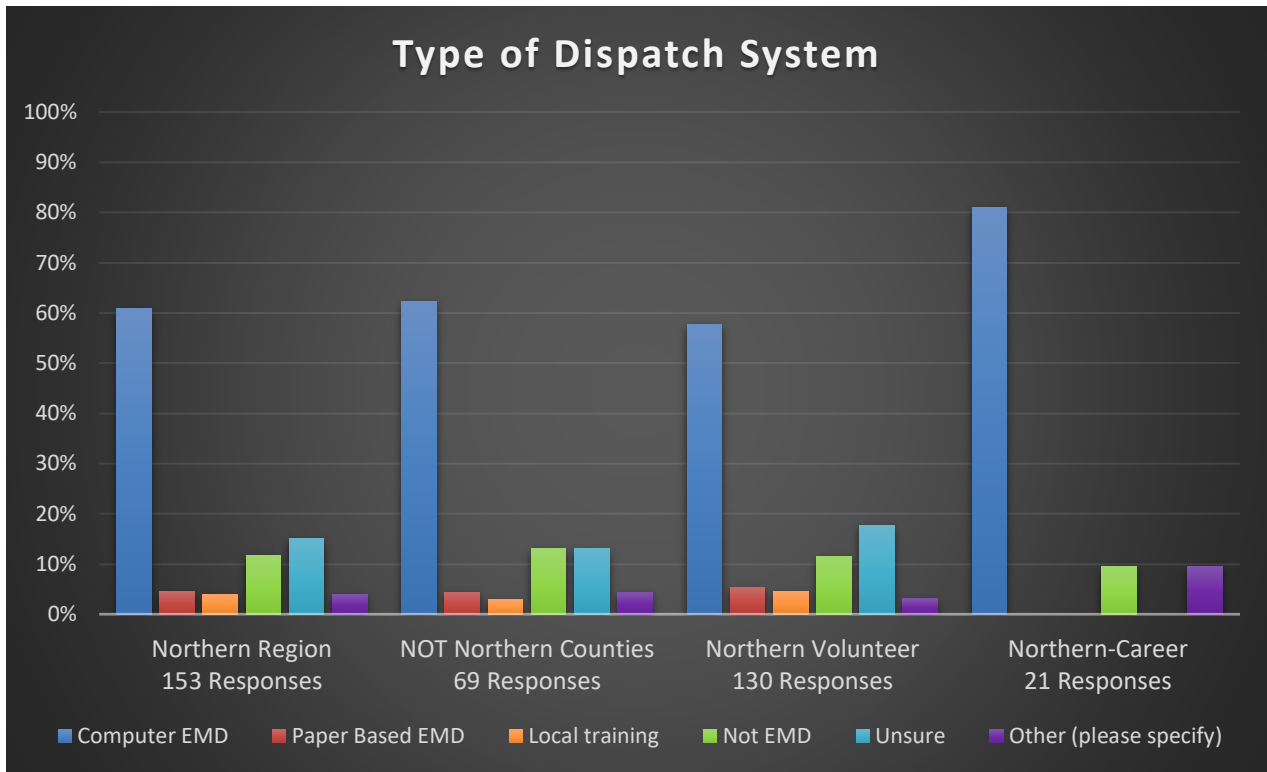
In the Northern Region, 27% of departments indicated that they had a person designated to manage quality improvement programs.

Title of Person Responsible for QI Program	#	%
Fire chief	14	11%
Assistant/Deputy Chief	9	7%
EMS Director	6	5%
Officer	5	4%
Name-no title	4	3%
Captain	3	2%
EMS Instructor	1	1%
Health and Safety Officer	1	1%
MCA	1	1%
President	1	1%
Staff	1	1%

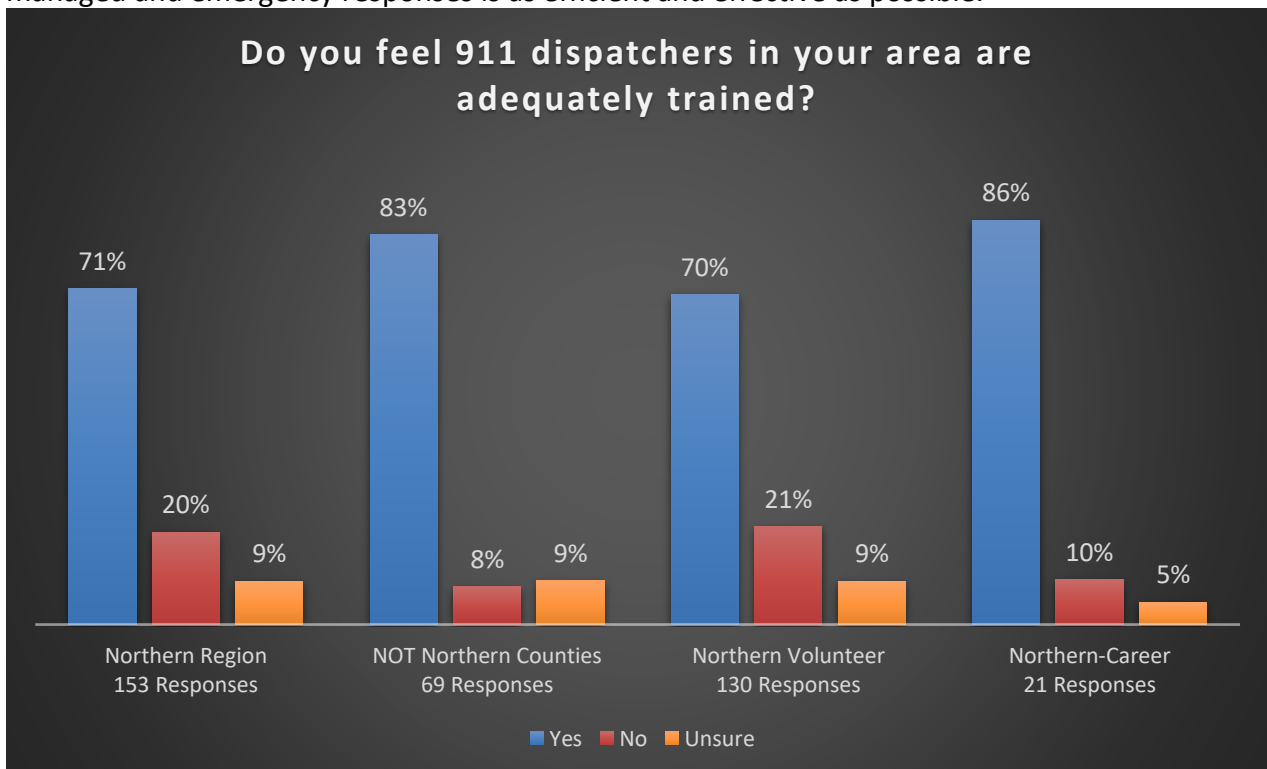
# of hours per week dedicated to CQI Program- Departments in Northern Michigan indicating a dedicated person.	Only or Mostly Volunteer (33 Responses)	Only or Mostly Career (16 Responses)
10-20 hours	9%	6%
5-9 hours	3%	38%
1-4 hours	67%	31%
0 hours	15%	0%
As needed, unknown, varies, not designated	6%	6%

Dispatch Characteristics

Dispatch systems are critical to effective and rapid response to emergency situations. There is a wide array of dispatch systems in the region.



Confidence in dispatch procedures and training is important to ensuring responses times are managed and emergency responses is as efficient and effective as possible.



Next Steps

Dissemination of Needs Assessment

This report will be made available online through partner organization websites: www.MiREMS.org and www.michiefs.org/NMFCA. The link to the document will be made widely available.

Additional charts and data will be available upon request and included in presentations at meeting and conferences. Fact sheets will be available in alignment with marketing efforts and to raise awareness of the critical issues facing first responders in Northern Michigan.

- **Local Use of Data:** The project partners encourage local fire and EMS agencies to utilize the data in this report to guide their own efforts. The needs assessment can serve as a launch pad for further conversation and exploring the unique challenges faced by individual departments. Upon request, local reports from individual counties or smaller regions may be prepared. The ability to run these reports will be dependent on the number of responses from a given area. Through a SAFER Implementation project, local departments are also able to request assistance from the Recruitment and Retention Coordinator. Assistance can be requested by contacting info@mirems.org.
- **Regional Use of Data:** Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association (NMFCA) and Michigan Rural EMS Network (MiREMS) will be utilizing data from the needs assessment to develop and implement various projects in the Northern Region. Included in these efforts are a SAFER Recruitment and Retention Implementation project, development of MiREMS Field Offices, and projects to address challenges such as critical stress. Additionally, the data will be useful for other regions of the state. Specifically, MiREMS is actively involved in Rural Communities Opioid Response programs in the Upper Peninsula and the Thumb Region.
- **Statewide Data:** Data that has already been collected will be available to state organizations and for statewide initiative. Due to the purposeful focus on the Northern Region, additional surveying may be necessary in other regions of the state to ensure adequate responses to adequately represent all areas of the state and to disaggregate the data for other regions.

Continued Dialogue

Dialogue around the data compiled in the needs assessment report is an important step in addressing local challenges. During preliminary data analysis, discussions were held in various settings including meetings of the Northern Michigan Fire Chiefs Association, the Michigan Rural EMS Network Board Retreat, and a behavioral health stakeholder meeting. Two focus groups were held to obtain input on preliminary data and potential strategies. One held in the Thumb Region and one at the Frederic Fire Department. Conversations have begun with staff in the EMS Division of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Copies of the reports will also be made available to the Michigan Center for Rural Health. NMFCA and MiREMS looks forward to the ongoing dialogue that will draw attention to the challenges and provide multiple avenues for collaboration and development of strategies to meet the needs of first responders in the region.

