

Professional Development within the Hendersonville Fire Department

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of other is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that the appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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### Abstract

The problem is the Hendersonville Fire Department has not encouraged professional development. The lack of professional development created lackadaisical attitude towards training and undermined the preparedness level for low frequency, high risk incidents. The purpose of this applied research project was to identify a plan to improve the professional development of department leadership. An evaluative research method was utilized. The research questions are (a) based on current recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association, Center for Public Safety Excellence, National Fire Academy, and the International City/County Management Association, what requirements should be implemented in the professional development program for management positions, (b) according to the Fire Service National Professional Development Model, what changes should be made to the current professional development program to better align the professional development of the management positions with this model, (c) how will the changes in professional development requirements be perceived by those in management positions, (d) what strategies might be utilized to overcome any perceived resistance to the recommended changes to the professional development program, (e) what outcomes should be utilized to determine success or failure in implementing the recommended changes, (f) how would the recommended changes best be implemented to reduce the impact on the budget, and (g) how should the changes be implemented? During this research, a survey and focus group was utilized to collect data and feedback. The results showed support for the recommended changes and identified areas of possible resistance. The recommendations included changes to the program and methods to reduce resistance.

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## Introduction

Professional development should include goals and strategies to develop a plan that leads to self-improvement. Fire service leaders are not exempt from the need for professional development. In fact, in order to be relevant now and in the future, fire service leaders must pursue professional development. The community policy makers as well as the public are requiring fire service leaders to become more professional in order to remain credible (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2009) (The International Association of Fire Chiefs Foundation, 2006).

The lack of a formal professional development plan has led to a lackadaisical attitude towards training and professional development. Furthermore, this attitude undermines the department's preparedness level for low frequency, high risk incidents. The current SOG has been met with some resistance. The purpose of this applied research project is to identify a plan to improve the professional development of the leadership within Hendersonville Fire Department and to include the members of the department in the development of this plan.

In order to identify a plan to improve the professional development of leadership, the following questions were answered by utilizing evaluative research, (a) based on current recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), National Fire Academy (NFA), and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), what requirements should be implemented in the professional development program for management positions in the Hendersonville Fire Department, (b) According to the Fire Service National Professional Development Model, what changes should be made to the current professional development program to better align the professional development of management positions within the Hendersonville Fire Department with this model, (c) how will the changes in the professional development program be perceived by those

in management positions within the Hendersonville Fire Department, (d) what strategies might be utilized to overcome any perceived resistance to the recommended changes to the professional development program, (e) what outcomes should be utilized to determine success or failure in implementation of the recommended changes to the professional development program, (f) how would the recommended changes to the professional development program best be implemented to reduce the impact on the fire department budget, and (g) how should the changes to the professional development program be implemented?

### Background and Significance

Hendersonville, North Carolina (City) is located approximately 26 miles south of Asheville, North Carolina. The City is bisected east and west by Interstate 26 and north and south by Highway 64. Hendersonville is a little more than six square miles in size and according to the 2010 Census, includes 13,137 year round residents. Serving as the county seat, Hendersonville includes the county jail, courthouse and emergency medical service's base of operations. The City serves as the population hub for Henderson County (County) and provides many community services including a 222 bed acute hospital (<http://www.pardeehospital.org/about-us.html>).

Hendersonville Fire Department (HFD) is a career department currently operating from one fire station with a second fire station under construction. HFD currently employs 27 full-time staff, with 24 members working a modified L.A. schedule. The 24 hour staff includes three Captains, six Lieutenants, nine Engineers, and six Firefighters. The Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Marshal work a 40-hour work week. In addition to the full-time staff, HFD currently employs fifteen part-time Firefighter/EMTs who fill in on an as needed basis. The department provides fire suppression, medical first responder, code enforcement, fire prevention,

and public education services. Responding to more than 3,200 incidents each year, approximately 75 percent of its call volume is medical in nature. This is perpetuated by more than 30 percent of the population served being age 65 or older. Actual fires account for less than 2 percent of the overall call volume for the department (Hendersonville Fire Department [HFD], 2014).

HFD undertook efforts to update many of the policies and procedures after hiring a new Fire Chief in June of 2011. One such update included the creation of a career development policy which listed each position within the department along with the certification and educational requirements for each. Prior to this, very little was required of leadership positions within HFD. Prior to June 2011, the Hendersonville Fire Department did not have a formal professional development program. The only requirements to hold the rank of Captain within the department was Firefighter II and Fire Inspector III. In September of 2011, the department began to formalize the requirements to hold each position within the department and the promotional process. Currently, this process has stalled with only the creation of a standard operating guideline (SOG) which lists various requirements for each position. The end result of this lack of requirements was little to no career development. In addition to this, HFD responded to very few actual fires. Because fires are low frequency, but include high risk, the lack of career development within HFD compounds the risk to its staff. In July of 2012, the Fire Chief issued SOG 130 – Career Development (Appendix D). This policy includes both requirements and recommendations for each position within the fire department. This policy was met with some resistance by personnel who had been with the department for several years and had very few requirements placed on them up to the point of this policy's implementation.

This research project is a product of the Executive Development course, the first year course in the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) which is administered by the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Fire Academy (NFA). This project specifically addresses the USFA Operational Goal #4 of “Improving the fire and emergency services’ professional status” (United States Fire Administration [USFA], n.d., p. 13). The HFD is undergoing much cultural change as it positions itself for the future needs of its community. This change must be managed and will require the combined leadership of the department to be successful. By implementing an effective career development program, the HFD will ensure that it provides its community with the highest level of service and maintains its relevance within the community. Without preparing the current and future leaders of the fire department through an effective career development program, the Hendersonville Fire Department runs the risk of becoming less effective as the vast knowledge base exits through attrition and retirement of the most experienced staff.

### Literature Review

During the course of this applied research project, many sources were reviewed. Those sources included national standards, published literature, and various internet sources related to fire service career development. This literature review was conducted to help develop the framework for a model career development program within the Hendersonville Fire Department.

Professional development within the fire service begins the day a rookie starts the academy. During this early phase in their fire service career, they will form the skills, attitudes, and abilities that will guide them throughout their careers. They will also develop friendships during this point that will help shape their future. Without these friendships and effective instructors, a new member of the department may not reach their full potential within the

organization. An organization must create a career development program that instills the effective attitudes, abilities, and skills determined to be the most effective. This process begins with ensuring the new members are provided the best instructors. Teaching and instructing members of the department should not be left to chance (Graner, 2006).

As members gain the knowledge, skills, and abilities to become officer candidates, the department must ensure they are not setup for failure. For example, in many fire service organizations a company officer is expected to have knowledge of the department and its operating environment on the macro level while operating at the micro level. An organization must ultimately define the level of the organization in which each level of the leadership will be held accountable to. It is critical to strike a balance between knowledge and application of that knowledge. Knowledge is useless without also understanding how to apply that knowledge (Sargent, 2006)

There are many factors and approaches to leadership development. One approach to leadership development is that leaders develop their skills and knowledge through the experiences they gain throughout their careers. This approach to leadership development would indicate that leaders are developed, not born as many people believe. This approach would also make leadership something anyone could learn. Another theory is the trait approach. This approach is based in the theory that only certain people are born with the traits required to become effective leaders. Finally, an additional approach is the situational approach. This approach describes leadership development as being dynamic and states it changes due to the situation (Northouse, 2010).

An additional text describes a difference between training and development. Training is the process of teaching employees how to do their current job while development refers to

teaching the bigger picture skills and knowledge required to do both current and future jobs.

Based on this approach, there are four phases to the development process. Phase one is utilizing a needs assessment to determine the set of skills and requisite knowledge required to effectively do one's job. Phase two would include designing training programs to support the needs assessment. Phase three would be determining the method to deliver the training designed in phase two. Finally, phase four includes an evaluation process to confirm the effectiveness of the development program (Bateman & Snell, 2009).

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is an international agency created in 1896 with that creates standards related to fire protection. Many of these consensus standards are adopted as guiding principles for the fire service and are considered best practices. While there are many NFPA standards which relate to the fire service and minimum knowledge requirements for various positions, NFPA 1021 Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications (NFPA 1021) and NFPA 1041 Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications (NFPA 1041) were deemed most appropriate for review (<http://www.nfpa.org/about-nfpa>).

The leadership within Hendersonville Fire Department includes supervisory, managerial, and administrative positions as defined in NFPA 1021. This standard further defines four levels of fire officers. Those levels are Fire Officer I, II, III, and IV. Each position represents an increase in level of responsibility and provides for a path of professional development which includes both requisite knowledge and skills. In addition to the requisite knowledge and skills, for the first time, the 2014 edition of NFPA 1021 addresses formal education within the fire service. This new edition illustrates the importance of formal education and encourages fire officer candidates to achieve appropriate levels of formal education based on the level of responsibility and competencies (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

NFPA 1021 requires Fire Officer I Candidates to meet the requirements of Firefighter II and Fire Instructor I. The general prerequisite knowledge includes information about the organization such as response districts, organizational layout, standard operating procedures, budgeting, and record keeping. The Fire Officer I Candidate must be capable of effectively using both written and verbal methods of communication. They shall be able to apply incident command principles. At this level, it is recommended that the Candidate be enrolled in an accredited college and seeking a degree (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

Fire Officer II candidates must meet all requirements of Fire Officer I and be knowledgeable in the law-making process at all levels of government, understands how the various components of government relate to the fire service, and know how the local government is organized. The formal education recommendation for the Fire Officer II candidate includes either an Associate degree or the equivalent amount of coursework towards earning a Baccalaureate degree (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

The Fire Officer III candidate must meet all requirements for Fire Officer II and have a thorough understanding of both public and private organizations that work to support the fire service and how each function. The Candidate shall be familiar with current trends within the fire service and how these trends impact the delivery of services to the citizens. This level also requires knowledge in management and administrative principles. This is also the level where the Fire Officer is expected to be knowledgeable in research methods, data collection, and evaluative methods. It is critical for the candidate to be an effective communicator in order to motivate members through the use of verbal and written communication. The Fire Officer III should have obtained a Baccalaureate degree at this level (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

A Fire Officer IV candidate shall meet all requirements of Fire Officer III and be capable of developing a comprehensive plan, improving and evaluating the department's demographics, and administer a risk management program to reduce property damage and injuries. The formal education recommendation for the Fire Officer IV candidate is a graduate degree (National Fire Protection Association, 2014).

Each level of Fire Officer builds upon the previous level and requires the lower level as a prerequisite. In the 2014 edition of NFPA 1021, the requirement for Fire Instructor II as defined in NFPA 1041 was removed as a prerequisite for Fire Officer III. Table 1 shows how the current structure of the HFD leadership correlates to Fire Officer Levels as defined in NFPA 1021.

Table 1: Hendersonville Fire Department Leadership Ranks

HFD Rank	NFPA 1021 Levels
Lieutenant	Fire Officer I (Supervisory)
Captain	Fire Officer II (Supervisory/Managerial)
Deputy Fire Chief	Fire Officer III (Managerial/Administrative)
Fire Chief	Fire Officer IV (Administrative)

*Note.* Correlation of HFD leadership rank to NFPA 1021 Levels

During the literature review for this applied research project, version 2.1 of the Fire Officer Designation (FO) and 5.1 of the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Designation applications were reviewed. Each of the applications includes sections for education, certifications, training/courses, and development goals under the professional development component. The first section is the education section and includes all formal degrees and certificate programs and requires the submission of transcripts and all degrees and certificates must be from regionally accredited colleges. The second section under the professional development component is the

certifications section. This section includes all certifications such as Fire Officer, Fire Instructor, etc. The applicant must include copies of all certifications listed in this section. The third section lists all training and courses related to fire and emergency services, human resources, public administration, and business courses. Finally, the fourth section is the development goals for the applicant. In this section, the applicant must lay out a proposed plan of continued professional development. This plan must include future education and training goals as well as intended professional contributions. The main purpose of this section is to provide a road map that will allow the applicant to continue their professional development and while demonstrating continued contributions to the field of fire and emergency services (Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE], 2013).

Beyond the similarities in the professional development component as well as other components, the FO and CFO applications include technical competencies. The two designations also include similar technical competencies, but the FO application only includes 12 technical competencies while the CFO includes 20. An additional area of difference between the two applications is the eligibility requirements. The CFO application includes two methods by which an applicant may gain eligibility to complete the application process. Those methods are category A and B. Category A allows the applicant to be exempt from addressing the technical competencies, but requires an extensive combination of chief officer experience and formal education. Category B requires the applicant to earn a minimum of 150 points in formal education and experience to be eligible to complete the application process and also requires that the applicant address the 20 technical competencies. In contrast, the FO application only provides for one method of determining eligibility and requires the applicant to gain a minimum of 100 points based on formal education and experience. FO applicants who earn the minimum

points to become eligible to complete the application must address the 12 technical competencies. Both the CFO and FO designation processes are designed to document a proven track record of professional development and to require that the applicant continue his or her professional development and contributions in the future. The designations are a peer review process and if the applicant fails to show continued professional development and contribution, the applicant will be denied renewal (Center for Public Safety Excellence [CPSE], 2013).

The National Fire Academy (NFA) is the premier fire service education and training institution for the Nation's fire service. According to the NFA website, more than 1.4 million students have been trained through the various courses and programs offered by the NFA. The most prestigious program offered by the NFA is the Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/efop/index.shtm>).

This program is designed to teach fire service leaders the value of research and how to apply it to problems identified within the fire service and specifically within their own departments. An EFOP candidate must understand the need to be proactive rather than reactive and place emphasis on risk-reduction, preventing death and injuries, and creating effective leadership through development. The EFOP program also encourages the lifelong learning process and focuses on the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities to become a leader in organizational change supported by solid research (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/efop/index.shtm>).

The EFOP consists of four courses delivered one course per year over a four year period. Each course is two weeks in length and includes an applied research project where the student must conduct research specific to their own agency using the information learned in the current year of the program. The student must complete the applied research project within six months of

the end of the current course in order to continue in the program. The courses for the program consist of Executive Development (RO123) in year one, Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction (RO274) in year two, Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management (RO306) in year three, and finally, Executive Leadership (RO125) in year four (<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/efop/index.shtm>).

In addition to the EFOP program, the NFA is also the driving force behind the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education (FESHE) Program. This program is designed to provide guidance in two and four year degree programs in the fire and emergency service. As part of this program, the National Professional Development model for fire officers was developed. Similar to the professional designations from the Center for Public Safety Excellence, the National Professional Development model includes formal education, certification/training, experience, and self-development while also recognizing specific professional designations ([http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/higher\\_ed/feshe/feshe\\_strategic.shtm#models](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/higher_ed/feshe/feshe_strategic.shtm#models)).



Figure 1. National Professional Development Model

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) is an association of management professionals within city and county governments. These management professionals are typically city and county managers who manage the various aspects of their respective government types and more importantly are the supervisors of the fire service leaders. Any research into the professional development of fire service leaders would be extremely short sighted without a review of recommendations and publications published by such an organization. The book *Managing Fire and Emergency Services* edited by Adam K. Thiel and Charles R. Jennings and published by the ICMA Press was reviewed for this research project. Chapter 9 titled, "Professional Development" was reviewed in depth. The basis for this chapter is that "beyond maintaining a broad range of technical skills, as firefighters assume progressively responsible leadership positions within their departments, they must be able to function as knowledgeable public administrators in a complex public policy environment" (Thiel, 2012, p. 248). A review of this chapter provides insight into the fact that many city and county managers are knowledgeable about the professional development programs and tools available to fire service professionals. This chapter specifically lists FESHE, the National Professional Development Model, and the IAFC Officer Development Handbook. In addition to these resources, the value of professional development as it relates to organizational strength is described. In keeping with the pattern of professional development previously described in other reviewed literature, the author also lists training, education, experience, self-development, and professional designations as important components of the fire service professional development process (Thiel, 2012).

Mentoring was identified as a critical component of the career development process accounting for approximately 20 percent of the development process. The mentoring process can

be both formal and informal and includes both a mentor as well as the mentee. A mentor is “an experienced, productive senior employee who helps to develop a less experienced employee” (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2010, p. 435). The mentee or protégé is the person being mentored. In a mentoring program, both the mentor and the protégé stand to gain from the relationship. The fire service is a profession that requires a vast amount of technical knowledge with the ability to apply that knowledge in the form of skills. As with many other professions, the fire service is positioned to experience a drastic loss in its knowledge base due to the retirement of the baby boomer generation (International Association of Fire Chiefs [IAFC], 2010).

While both formal and informal mentoring are both very important to the career development process, the informal mentoring can be very inconsistent. Without a method to measure the mentoring process, it would be difficult to determine the success of the program. Formal mentoring programs also provide everyone with the same opportunities and can reduce the appearance of discriminatory practices. Regardless if the mentoring is formal or informal, the mentor and the protégé must share some similarities or common ground. Some well-known companies such as Dow Chemical have mentoring programs that incorporate a web-based mentor and protégé matching program. These matching programs consider many traits, interests, and goals in order to develop a list of possible mentors (Noe et al., 2010).

To be successful, mentoring programs must include several characteristics. According to (Noe et al., 2010) the following are the characteristics of successful formal mentoring programs:

1. “Mentoring and protégé participation is voluntary. Relationship can be ended at any time without fear of punishment.

2. The mentor-protégé matching process does not limit the ability of informal relationships to develop. For example, a mentor pool can be established to allow protégés to choose from a variety of qualified mentors.
3. Mentors are chosen on the basis of their past record in developing employees, willingness to serve as a mentor, and evidence of positive coaching, communication, and listening skills.
4. Mentor-protégé matching is based on how the mentor's skills can help meet the protégé's needs.
5. The purpose of the program is clearly understood. Projects and activities that the mentor and protégé are expected to complete are specified.
6. The length of the program is specified. Mentor and protégé are encouraged to pursue the relationship beyond the formal period.
7. A minimum level of contact between the mentor and protégé is specified.
8. Mentors and protégés need to determine the mechanics of the relationship: when they will meet, how often, and how they will communicate outside of the meetings.
9. Protégés are encouraged to contact one another to discuss problems and share successes.
10. The mentor program is evaluated. Interviews with mentors and protégés give immediate feedback regarding specific areas of dissatisfaction. Surveys gather more detailed information regarding benefits received from participating in the program.

11. Employee development is rewarded, which signals managers that mentoring and other development activities are worth their time and effort” (p. 436).

The mentoring process benefits both the mentor and the protégé. The protégé learns and gains knowledge from the mentor while the mentor develops their interpersonal skills and may experience a greater level of self-worth. In addition to the internal mentoring process, mentors and protégés may be from different organizations. This type of mentoring may be helpful when a protégé might feel more comfortable working with someone outside their own organization, but who shares some of their own traits and beliefs (Noe et al., 2010).

As a mentee or protégé, one must be eager to grow and change. Change is a fact of life and in order for change to occur, the protégé must also be willing to change. He or she must be willing to invest the time in order to be successful. Being respectful and having a positive attitude helps a protégé attract the appropriate mentor. The mentee must have a purpose, be loyal, confident, and a willingness to be accountable for their growth under the tutelage of their mentor. In contrast, the mentor must have a clear sense of direction in mind when they agree to accept a protégé. The mentor must connect with the mentee and equip them with the missing traits or tools they need to be successful in their careers. Mentors must enable and encourage their mentees to become self-motivated (Viscuso, 2013).

## Procedures

### *General Procedures*

*Survey.* As this study is focused on the career development of officers within the Hendersonville Fire Department, a single 20-question survey was created using the web based survey system SurveyGizmo by Widgix, LLC (see Appendix A). The purpose of the survey was to determine how those in management positions might perceive the existing career development

policy and any possible changes recommended as a result of the answers to research questions 1 and 2. A test group of three people were asked to take the survey to ensure understanding and provide feedback on the survey prior to live deployment. The survey was distributed to all members of Hendersonville Fire Department via an internal email sent on 2/20/2014 with a deadline of 2/23/2014 (see Appendix C). While limited demographics data was collected on the survey, this data does not identify specific individuals. The demographics data was important to determine possible patterns of resistance or support based on position and education. All respondents were provided with an identical link to the online survey.

Beyond the limited demographics questions, the survey included questions that were focused on two primary areas of interest. Those areas were the current career development policy and possible changes to the career development policy based on the literature review. The questions consisted of closed-ended and forced choice questions. Some closed-ended questions also required comments to provide more depth and breadth to later develop focus group questions. The questions were developed based on a review of the requirements contained in the current career development policy for Hendersonville Fire Department and the recommendations of National Fire Protection Association, the Center for Public Safety Excellence, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Academy, and the International City/County Management Association.

Due to the small size of the department, it was determined that the survey would be sent to 26 of the 27 personnel within the department. The single member excluded from the survey is the author of this research project and it was surmised the participation of the author may lead to the perception of bias among the department. The desired confidence level was 95 percent with a margin of error plus or minus 5 percent. In order to achieve this level of confidence, a minimum

of 25 of 26 surveys would need to be completed. Once the deadline for survey completion was reached, the survey results were downloaded to a Microsoft Excel 2013 file for further analysis.

*Focus Group.* A focus group was conducted to further explore the results of the survey. One shift of personnel was randomly selected to participate in the focus group. This focus group included two fire officers, two fire engineers, and two firefighters from within the department. This focus group represented 22 percent of the department personnel. The purpose of the focus group was to facilitate open and candid communication that may lead to a better understanding of the survey results. The participants of the focus group were asked to meet at a neutral location away from the fire station and were provided dinner and non-alcoholic refreshments.

*Based on current recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), National Fire Academy (NFA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), what requirements should be implemented in the professional development program for management positions in the Hendersonville Fire Department?*

To answer this research question, a review of NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications 2014 Edition, the Fire Officer and Chief Fire Officer Designation processes and applications, the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, the International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, and the International Association of City/County Managers Association's Managing Fire and Emergency Services Green Book was conducted.

*According to the Fire Service National Professional Development Model, what changes should be made to the current professional development program to better align the professional*

*development of the management positions within the Hendersonville Fire Department with this model?*

A review of the current career development policy for Hendersonville Fire Department was conducted (see Appendix D) and then compared and contrasted to the Fire Service National Professional Development Model.

*How will the changes in professional development requirements be perceived by those in management positions with the Hendersonville Fire Department?*

A 20 question survey was created to answer this research question. The questions were a combination of close-ended with comments and forced choice. In order to determine how the proposed changes may be perceived by those currently in management positions the questions were divided into five specific groups. The groups are demographics, recommended career development program components, current career development program certification requirements, proposed career development certification requirements, and support for possible changes.

*What strategies might be utilized to overcome any perceived resistance to the recommended changes to the professional development program for management personnel?*

A focus group was conducted utilizing questions developed from the comments included in the results of the survey conducted to answer research question 3. The focus group consisted of fire officers, fire engineers, and firefighters from within the department. The questions for the focus group are included in Appendix E.

*What outcomes should be utilized to determine possible success or failure in implementation of the recommended changes to the professional development program?*

This research question was answered by reviewing the current levels of education, experience, and certifications of all officers within the Hendersonville Fire Department. Once this information was compiled, it was then compared to the recommended changes identified in research questions 1 and 2. Finally, a target compliance of 90 percent was chosen to allow for personnel turnover and promotions.

*How would the recommended changes to the professional development plan best be implemented to reduce the impact on the fire department budget?*

Using the target of 90 percent compliance and the results of the data review in research question 5, an analysis of the effects on the department budget was conducted. This analysis included the number of personnel hours required to meet the recommended changes, the number of personnel who would be affected by the changes, and the personnel costs associated with overtime and back fill. Additionally, educational incentives identified during the focus groups were also included.

*How should the proposed changes to the professional development plan be implemented?*

To answer this research question, results from all previous research questions were evaluated to develop a holistic approach to implementing the proposed changes taking into consideration the costs associated with the changes, methods identified in the focus groups to reduce resistance to the changes, fiscal impact on the department budget, and a pace that balances that fiscal impact with the professional development needs of the department.

#### *Limitations*

Due to the relatively small size of the department, all staff except for the author was asked to take the survey. Only six members or 22% of the department participated in the focus group. While this group represents more than 20% of the entire department, it is possible the six

participants may not truly represent the remaining portion of the department. The primary concern would be areas of resistance not being identified.

## Results

### *General Results*

Appendix B lists the results of the 20 question survey. The total number of completed surveys was n = 26 (100% response rate). Appendix F lists all feedback from the focus group which was developed from the feedback of the 20 question survey.

*Based on current recommendations from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE), National Fire Academy (NFA), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), what requirements should be implemented in the professional development program for management positions in the Hendersonville Fire Department?*

The review of the listed resources resulted in an agreement on the elements which should be incorporated into a well-designed career development program. Based on this review, there were four elements identified. Those four elements are:

1. Education – College level general education and fire science related courses
2. Learning – Certifications and training courses
3. Experience – On the job work knowledge and skills developed over time and competency based
4. Self-development – Interpersonal skills, communication skills, participation in mentoring programs

*According to the Fire Service National Professional Development Model, what changes should be made to the current professional development program to better align the professional*

*development of the management positions within the Hendersonville Fire Department with this model?*

The Fire Service National Professional Development Model mirrors the result of research question one and includes the identical four elements of education, learning, experience, and self-development. Once the current HFD career development policy was reviewed and compared to this model, it was determined that the policy focuses primarily on the learning element. In addition, the current policy does not adequately address the elements of education, experience, and self-development. For example, the current policy only lists generic types of degrees for certain positions, but does not list appropriate college courses which would provide relevant career development for company officers. Furthermore, experience and self-development are ignored almost entirely by the current policy.

*How will the changes in professional development requirements be perceived by those in management positions with the Hendersonville Fire Department?*

*Survey.* When asked about the importance of formal education on career development, the results of the survey showed an even split between the staff who felt that formal education was very important, or critical (50%) and not important or only somewhat important (50%).

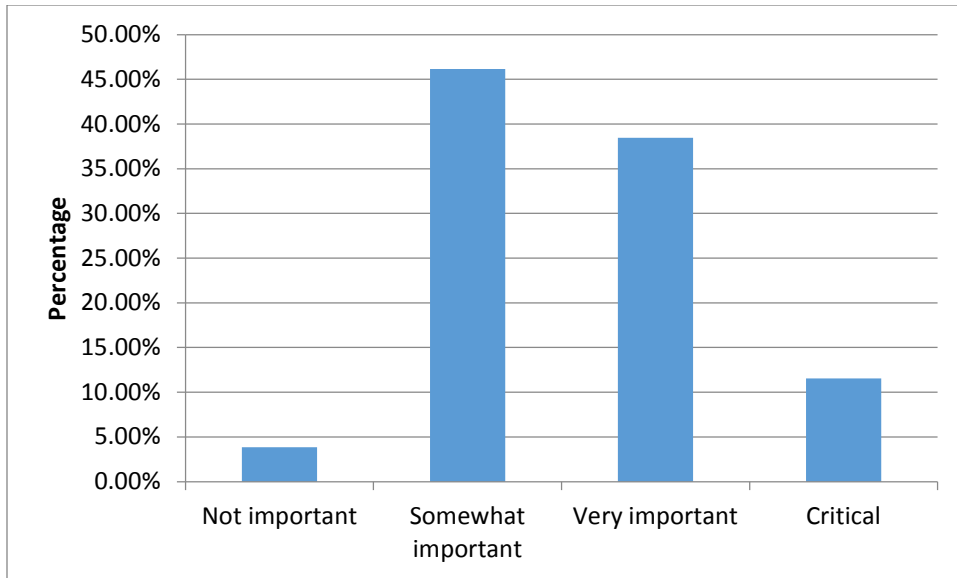


Figure 2. Question 3: Importance of Formal Education

In contrast, when asked if they would support a requirement for formal education, the response was much more favorable. Of the responses to the survey, 77% indicated they supported a requirement for formal education.

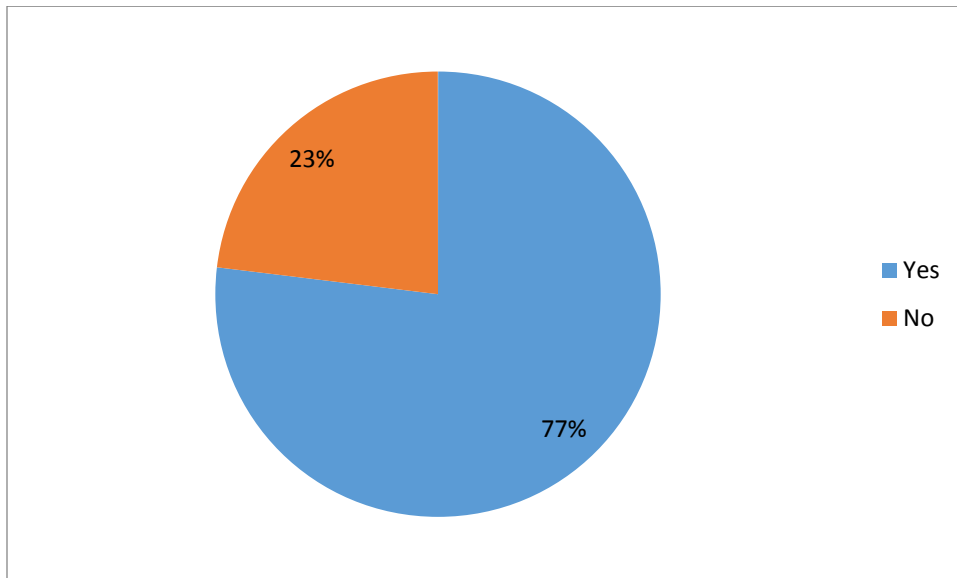


Figure 3. Question 16: Support of Formal Education Requirement

Question 6 asked the participants to rank the importance of certifications and training. 73.08% responded that training and certifications were very important or critical, while 26.92%

responded it was not important or only somewhat important (see Figure 4). Based on this result, there appears to be support for training and certifications. There does appear to be some resistance to certifications and training.

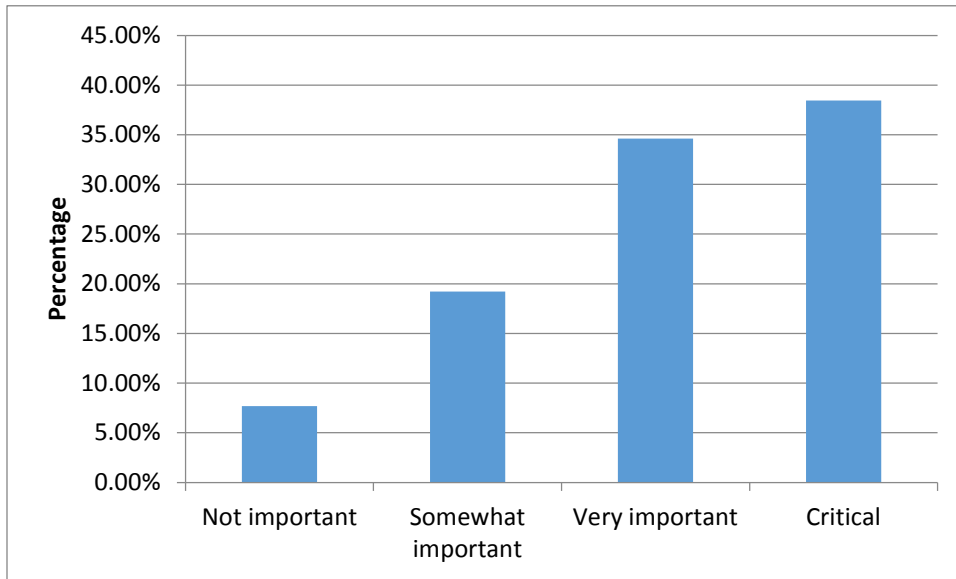


Figure 4. Question 6: Importance of Certifications and Training

Question 4 asked about the importance of experience as a component of the career development process. The results indicated that experience was very important or critical 92.31% (see Figure 5).

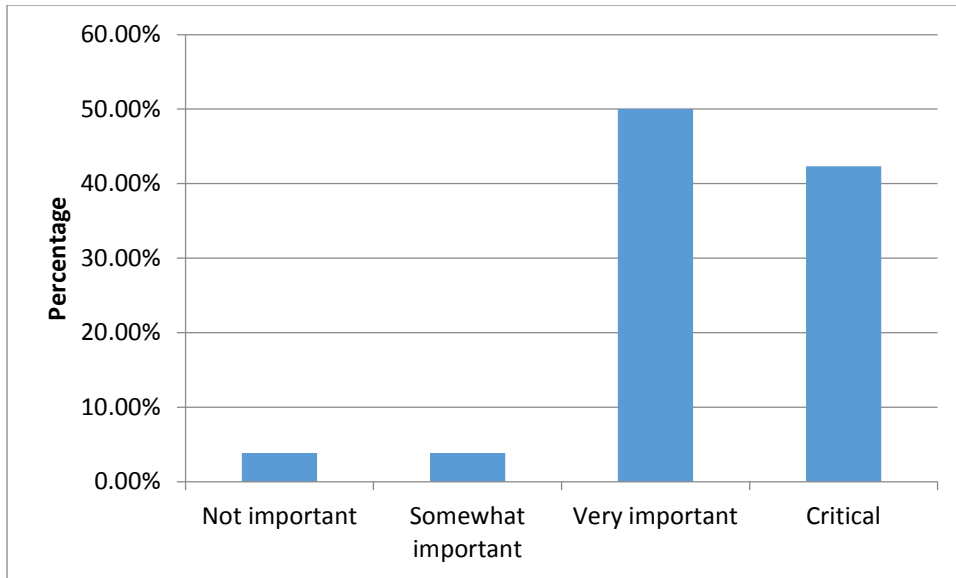


Figure 5. Question 4: Importance of Experience

Question 20 expanded on the experience element of the career development process and based on the results, it was determined that the majority of the responses supported specified numbers of years of experience for each of the four levels management within HFD. The recommended years of experience for Lieutenant was 3 years, Captain, 4 years, Deputy Chief 5 years and Chief 6 years at the next lowest level. For example, before a person may be eligible to compete in a promotional process for Lieutenant within HFD, that person must have a minimum of 3 years at the Engineer level (see Figure 6).

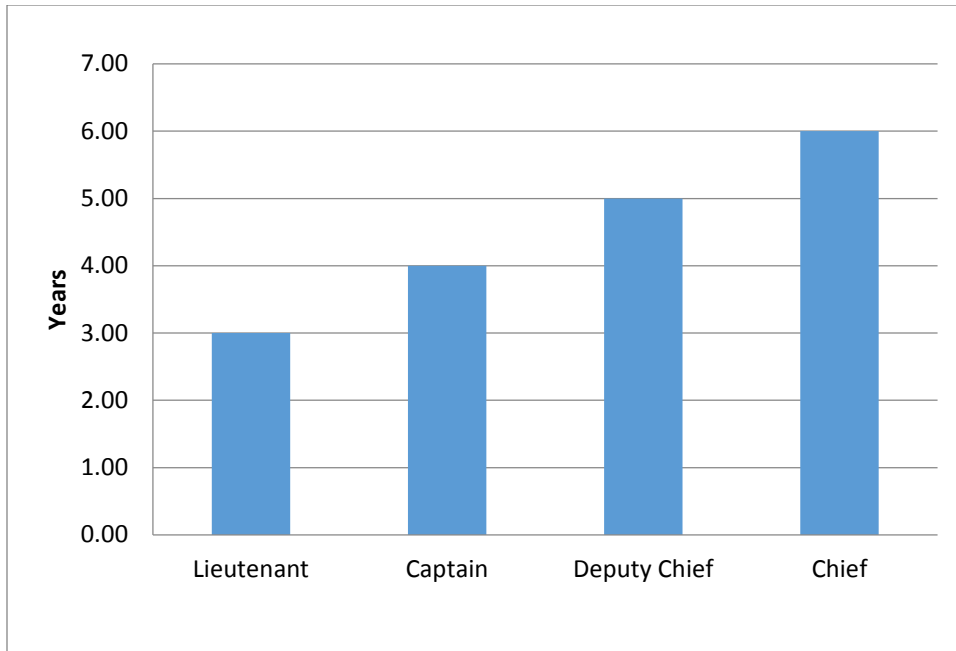


Figure 6. Question 20: Required years of experience

Questions 5 and 17 addressed mentoring. Question 5 asked participants to rate the importance of mentoring and resulted in 73.08% of respondents who felt mentoring was very important or critical to the development process of officers (see Figure 7). Question 17 explored the level of support for a mentoring program. A mentoring program was supported by 100% of the respondents.

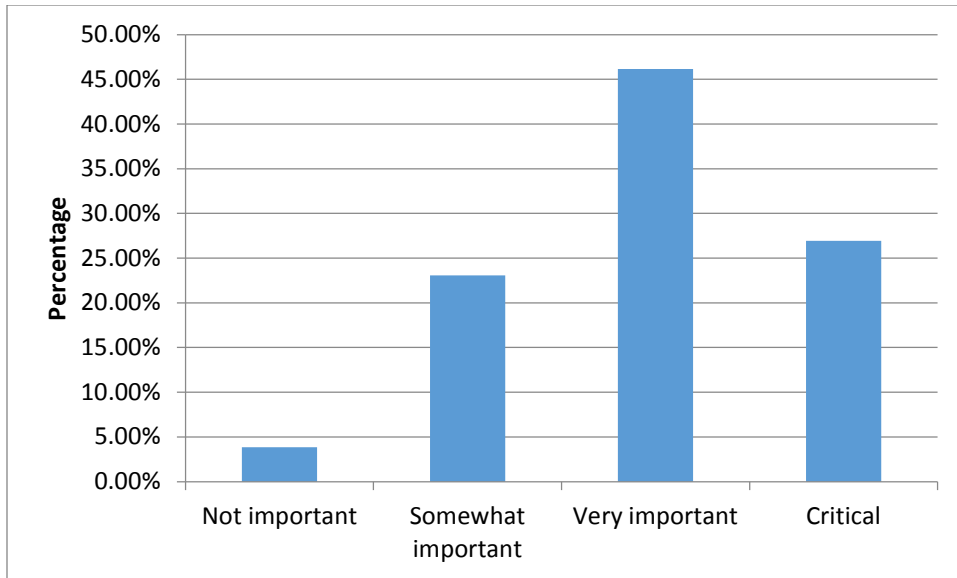


Figure 7. Question 5: Importance of a mentoring program

Question 7 asked respondents to indicate if they felt that the current career development policy adequately prepared a person to become an officer within HFD. 58% of respondents felt the current policy was adequate (see Figure 8).

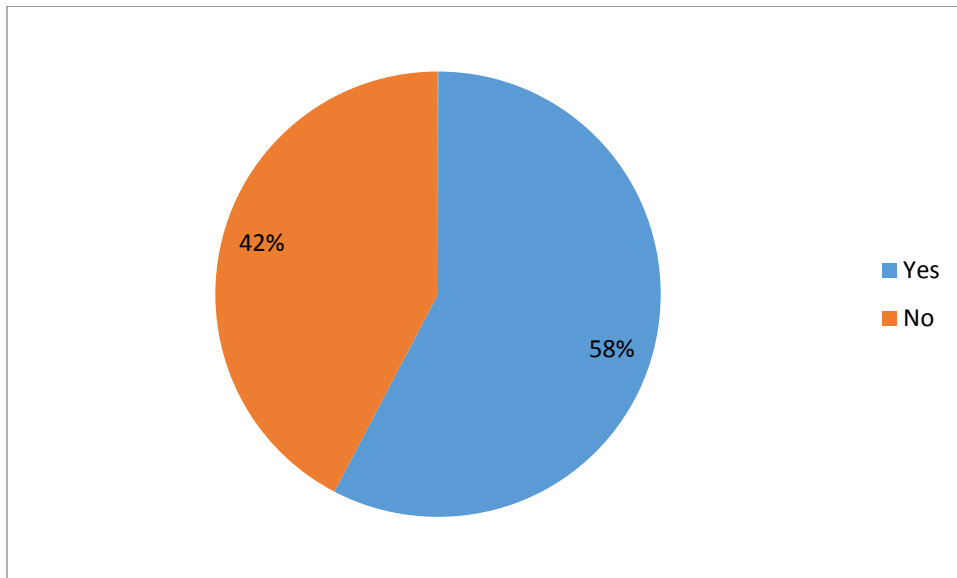


Figure 8. Question 7: Is current career development policy adequate?

*What strategies might be utilized to overcome any perceived resistance to the recommended changes to the professional development program for management personnel?*

*Focus Group.* The focus group questions were developed based on responses from the survey. Specifically, the focus group questions were based on how to overcome possible resistance to formal education, how to define and measure experience, and how mentoring should be implemented. While there was no indicated resistance to mentoring program, there was very little agreement on how to implement mentoring within HFD.

#### *Formal Education*

The main areas of resistance for formal education were centered on time, expense, and lack of motivation. Time was identified as the most critical factor. With many members of the department working second and third jobs while trying to raise a family, many were concerned about having time to devote to earning a formal education. In addition, many expressed concern that the department would set an unrealistic timeframe to earn the formal education. Cost was the second area of concern. While the City provides a 50% tuition reimbursement program, this program requires the employee to pay the costs upfront and submit for the reimbursement once an acceptable grade has been earned. There are limited funds available for this program and many times those funds are depleted prior to the end of the budget year and create the risk that an employee may not be reimbursed. Finally, the group indicated a lack of motivation would likely be an area of resistance. Strategies that were identified by the focus group which may reduce resistance to formal education were:

1. Provide time on shift to complete formal education courses. This would include time to complete assignments, studying, etc.
2. Provide coverage for staff to attend courses at local colleges while on shift
3. Increase funds available for tuition reimbursement program

4. Create higher education incentive based on number of hours completed towards higher education requirement
5. Set mandatory deadline for formal education requirement. While this may in itself create resistance, the group felt if a reasonable deadline was set, it would create motivation

### *Experience*

Experience was a difficult discussion. The idea of simply requiring a specific number of years of experience in order to be eligible to compete in a promotional process was debated for a significant portion of time during the focus group. Some participants argued that someone may have many years of experience based on an arbitrary amount of time, but this does not equate to competency. The participants indicated that to reduce resistance to implementing an experience component within the career development program, experience should be based on the documented number of hours performing specific competencies. In addition, the group felt experience could include a task book to track the candidate's performance.

### *Mentoring*

As previously stated, there was no resistance to implementing a mentoring program as a component of the career development process. The issue raised by the group was how to implement a mentoring program. There was considerable disagreement on identifying mentors and how to formalize the process. Several participants suggested that mentoring remain an informal process and leave individuals to identify mentors on their own. It was also pointed out that measuring the outcomes of an informal mentoring program would be problematic at best.

*What outcomes should be utilized to determine possible success or failure in implementation of the recommended changes to the professional development program?*

Based on a review of all current officers within HFD, it was determined that 44.4% lacked Fire Officer I, 33.3% lacked Fire Inspector I, 33.3% lacked Emergency Medical Technician Basic, and 22.2% lacked Fire Officer II. In addition, 11.1% also did not have Fire Instructor I which is a prerequisite for Fire Officer I. When compared to all officers within the department, only 44% of the officers meet all of the recommended requirements. It is desired that all officers within HFD meet all recommended requirements based on the recommendations included in this applied research project.

*How would the recommended changes to the professional development plan best be implemented to reduce the impact on the fire department budget?*

Recommended changes should be implemented over a reasonable time frame, such as two years. As previously discussed, time was identified as a critical factor in formal education. The same concern would likely be true in regards with training and certification courses. An additional benefit to spreading the implementation over a reasonable period of time is the ability to limit the budget impact. Large increases in budget expenses would likely be met with resistance from the City Manager's office as well as the City Council. A review of the current delinquent requirements for the existing officers resulted in an estimated cost of \$17,230.20 based on the use of overtime alone.

*How should the proposed changes to the professional development plan be implemented?*

The proposed changes and how they should be implemented are included in the recommendations section of this research project. This research question is similar to the previous question as it relates to how the recommended changes should be implemented. However, the primary difference between this research question and the previous question is the fact that this research question is focused on the how the changes should be implemented from

an organizational standpoint. In contrast, the previous research question addresses the budgetary impact of the recommended changes.

### Discussion

The purpose of this research project was to review examples of available literature to determine if the current HFD career development policy was properly structured. After the review of the literature, it was determined that the current policy focused too heavily on certifications and training. In fact, the review of the current career development policy and the resulting comparison to the literature demonstrated that HFD, like most other fire departments “focus on education and training and spend most of their resources on accomplishing the training mission” (IAFC, 2010, p. 4). “People learn best from experience” (IAFC, 2010, p. 5) and experience must include more depth specific to the job. A person cannot gain experience by exposure alone. The experience must be important. It must include the risk of failure and must be visible (IAFC, 2010).

The National Professional Development Model includes experience as a foundation to the development process. In addition, this model is in agreement with the development process included in the professional designation process through the Center for Public Safety Excellence. For example, both address the need to continue the learning process throughout your career. The International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, calls this process “maintenance.” “The initial achievements of training, education, and experience are vital and occupy much of this handbook’s attention. However, the professional development process is life-long. Therefore, the initial achievement is not sufficient to meet the challenges of the fire and rescue service leaders” (IAFC, 2010, p. 14). The Center for Public Safety Excellence refers

to this process in their designation manuals as “Designee Development Goals” (CPSE, 2013, p. 16).

The results of this study indicate a desire of the staff to improve the professionalism of the department as well as general support for many of the recommended changes identified during the literature review. As identified in the results of both the survey and the focus group, this support for change is not 100% void of resistance. However, the resistance seems to be limited to primarily a person’s time commitment and associated personal expenses as a secondary concern. Several methods of reducing this resistance were identified through the focus group.

Ultimately, this applied research project provided a review of the current career development policy and identified areas of weakness. The literature review provided several additional areas of the career development process that should be incorporated into any well-rounded development policy. This research project resulted in recommendations that will improve the development of the staff within HFD.

The organizational implications resulting from this study include changes to the current career development policy, changes in the current thought process of the department in regards to employee development, and possible budgetary impacts. In addition, the career development process within HFD may be positively affected by the recommended changes if those changes are implemented in a way that addresses the concerns of the staff as identified during the focus group.

### Recommendations

The number one priority should be to update the current career development policy to include the four main areas identified during the research. Those areas are education, learning,

experience, and self-development. The focus should be on defining experience and developing a process that will allow an individual to gain meaningful experience which is relevant to the position and the department. The risk of failure must include real consequences and the experience cannot simply be familiarity with the job. Experience should be defined and related competencies identified to allow for an objective review of experience. Simply assigning an arbitrary amount of time to experience does not ensure a person's success. If the individual has not been exposed to the risk of failure, their level of experience is not as great as those that have during the same amount of time.

The second priority is to provide staff with time on shift to work on formal education. Additional time away from family or a second job was identified during the focus group as the main concern for the majority of participants. If staff are required to earn a formal education and are required to devote more time outside of their normal workday, a formal education requirement would likely be met with resistance. In addition to providing time on shift, the fire department should identify and make available areas that are quiet in order to facilitate the learning process. The current tuition reimbursement program offered by the City should be increased and an educational incentive based on the number of credit hours earned should be implemented. The incentive should be based on a fixed amount rather than a percentage of pay. An incentive based on a percentage of pay creates an unknown considering the impact it may have through compounding when future merit and cost of living increases are issued.

A third priority is to update the training and certification requirements to reflect the needs of the department. For example, requiring a Lieutenant to earn a Fire Officer II certification is less critical than ensuring that Lieutenant gains relevant experience. As the research pointed out, relevant experience should be the primary focus in the redesigned career development program.

Finally, a mentoring program should be implemented within the Hendersonville Fire Department. The program should be voluntary and encourage the use of both internal and external mentors. Furthermore, the program should allow for both informal and formal mentoring. Formal mentors should be identified through a voluntary process that matches their skills, abilities, and personalities with those of the intended protégé. The protégé should be given a list of possible matches to choose from. The final decision to work with a specific mentor should be that of the protégé. It is important that the department choose possible mentors carefully to ensure the mentors share the core values of the department. Choosing the wrong mentor can have a negative outcome on the career development process.

By implementing these recommended changes, the development of fire department personnel will become better-rounded and provide for better customer service. More importantly, the safety of the department personnel will increase as the development level increases. It is vital the organization continues to review the development process and make changes based on the desired outcomes. Each person within an organization has a personal responsibility to continuously seek self-improvement.

These recommended changes should be implemented in a way to ensure minimal impact on the overall departmental budget. The critical element, experience, is gained by competency based practice and real world application. Certifications and formal education represents the largest expense in the implementation of the recommended changes outlined by this research.

A follow-up evaluation should be conducted at the end of a two year period to evaluate the effectiveness of the recommended changes. This follow-up should include employee surveys to ascertain the perceived success of the new program, a review of incident response data to

identify trends of service improvement, and customer service surveys to measure the level of satisfaction at the customer level.

Finally, readers are recommended to review their own departments and determine if their career development programs are primarily focused on obtaining certifications and formal education. The use of surveys and focus groups is extremely helpful in gauging the perceptions of your staff and may identify areas of weakness in your current program. Utilizing a focus group was a critical element in this research and identified possible areas of resistance which were unknown at the beginning of this research.

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## Appendix A: Professional Development within the Hendersonville Fire Department

## Professional Development within the Hendersonville Fire Department

## Page One

1) Please choose your current highest level of education.\*

- 12th grade or less
- Graduated high school or equivalent
- Some college, no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Post-graduate degree

2) Please select your current role within the department\*

- Administration (Chief, Deputy Chief, Deputy Fire Marshal)
- Company Officer (Captain/Lieutenant)
- Engineer
- Firefighter

3) Please rank the importance of formal education in the professional development of management staff within the Hendersonville Fire Department. Formal education is defined as college level education such as Associate, Bachelor, Master, or Doctorate Degrees.\*

- Not important       Somewhat important       Very important       Critical

4) Please rank the importance of experience in the professional development of management staff within the Hendersonville Fire Department. Experience is defined as knowledge and skills gained on the job.\*

- Not important       Somewhat important       Very important       Critical

5) Please rank the importance of mentoring in the professional development of management staff within the Hendersonville Fire Department. Mentoring is the guidance, direction, and career advice provided to a new or aspiring officer by someone outside of that person's normal supervisory chain.\*

- Not important       Somewhat important       Very important       Critical

6) Please rank the importance of training/certification on the professional development of management staff within the Hendersonville Fire Department.\*

- Not important       Somewhat important       Very important       Critical

7) Do you feel the current Career Development Policy adequately prepares a person to be successful as a leader within the Hendersonville Fire Department? Please explain your answer in the comments section.\*

- Yes
- No

Comments\*:

8) For the position of Lieutenant (Supervising Fire Officer), please indicate whether each should be required, recommended, or not applicable based on your opinion of the applicability to the success of the position\*

	Required	Recommended	Not Applicable
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician – Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9) For the position of Captain (Managing Fire Officer), please indicate whether each should be required, recommended, or not applicable based on your opinion of the applicability to the success of the position\*

	Required	Recommended	Not Applicable
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Medical Technician – Basic			
Fire Instructor II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer III	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) For the position of Deputy Chief (Administrative Fire Officer), please indicate whether each should be required, recommended, or not applicable based on your opinion of the applicability to the success of the position\*

	Required	Recommended	Not Applicable
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician – Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Fire Officer (EFO) National Fire Academy (NFA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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11) For the position of Fire Chief (Executive Fire Officer), please indicate whether each should be required, recommended, or not applicable based on your opinion of the applicability to the success of the position\*

	Required	Recommended	Not Applicable
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician – Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Fire Officer (EFO) National Fire Academy (NFA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12) The proposed changes to the Career Development Policy for the position of Lieutenant (Supervising Fire Officer) are included below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each requirement.\*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician - Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire and Life Safety Educator I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enrollment into Higher Education (Degree) Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13) The proposed changes to the Career Development Policy for the position of Captain (Managing Fire Officer) are included below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each requirement.\*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician - Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fire and Life Safety Educator II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate Degree (or equivalent number of semester hours in a Bachelor Degree Program)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer Designation (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) The proposed changes to the Career Development Policy for the position of Deputy Chief (Administrative Fire Officer) are included below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each requirement.\*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician - Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer III	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire and Life Safety Educator III	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Bachelor Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Fire Officer Designation (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15) The proposed changes to the Career Development Policy for the position of Fire Chief (Executive Fire Officer) are included below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each requirement.\*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Firefighter II	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency Medical Technician - Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Instructor I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Officer IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire and Life Safety Educator III	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire Inspector I	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief Fire Officer Designation (CPSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Executive Fire Officer (NFA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



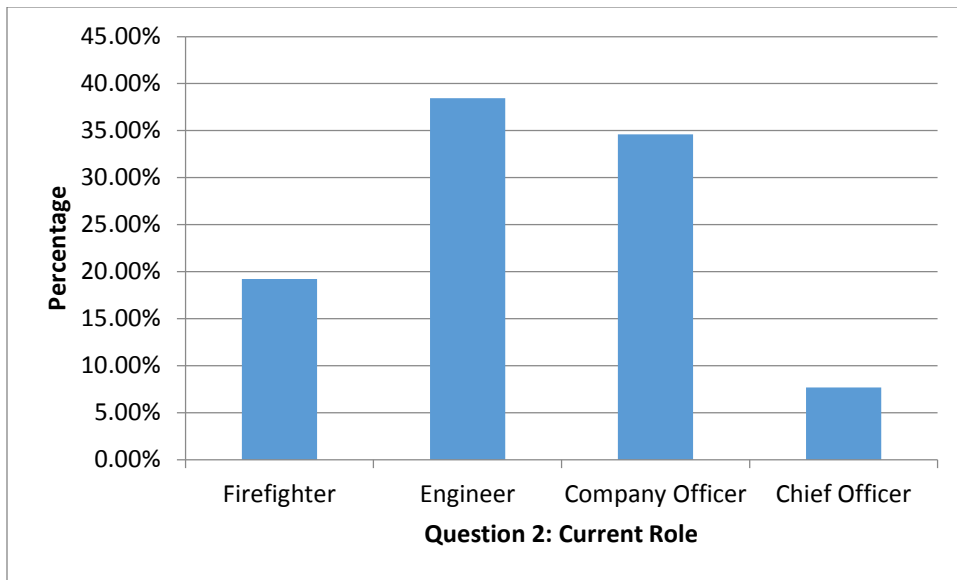
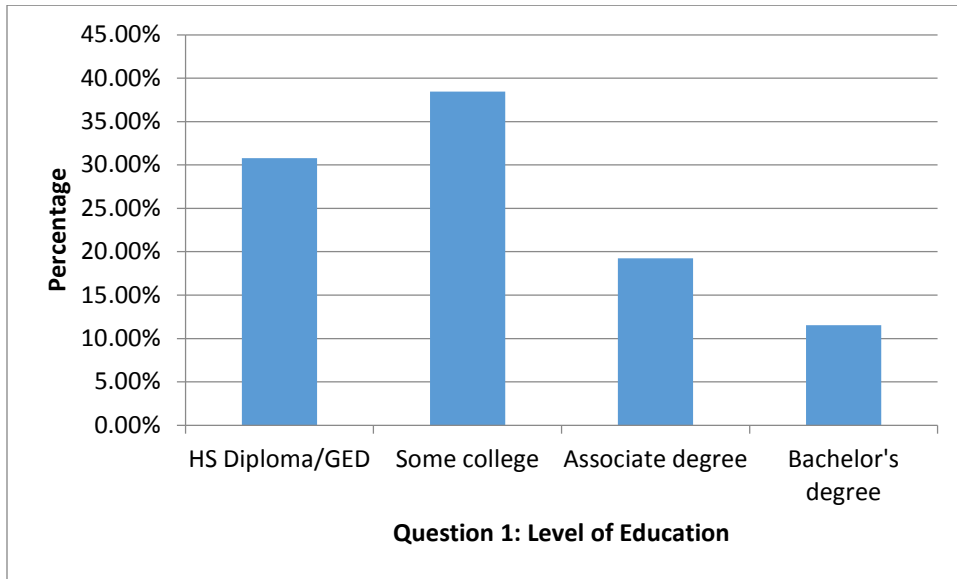
Deputy Chief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

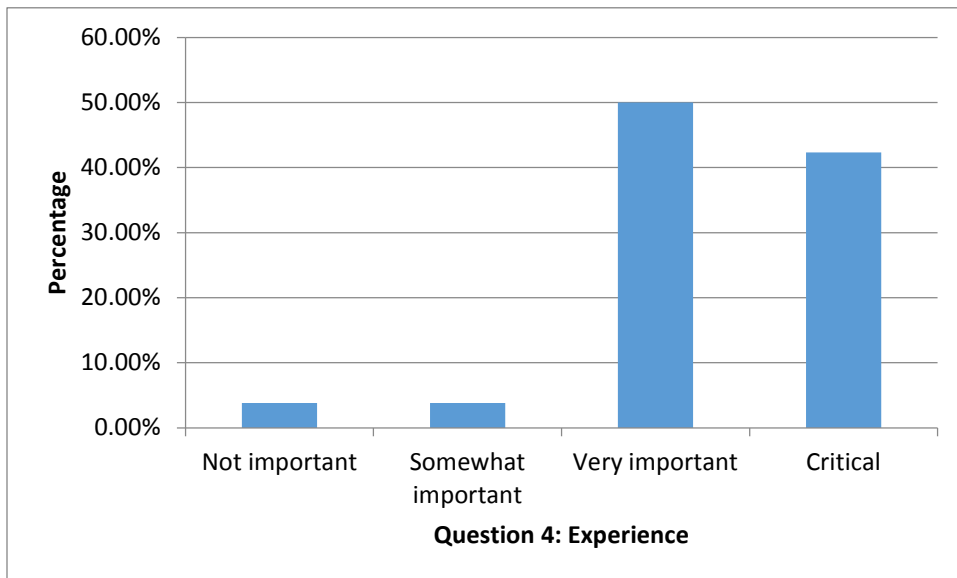
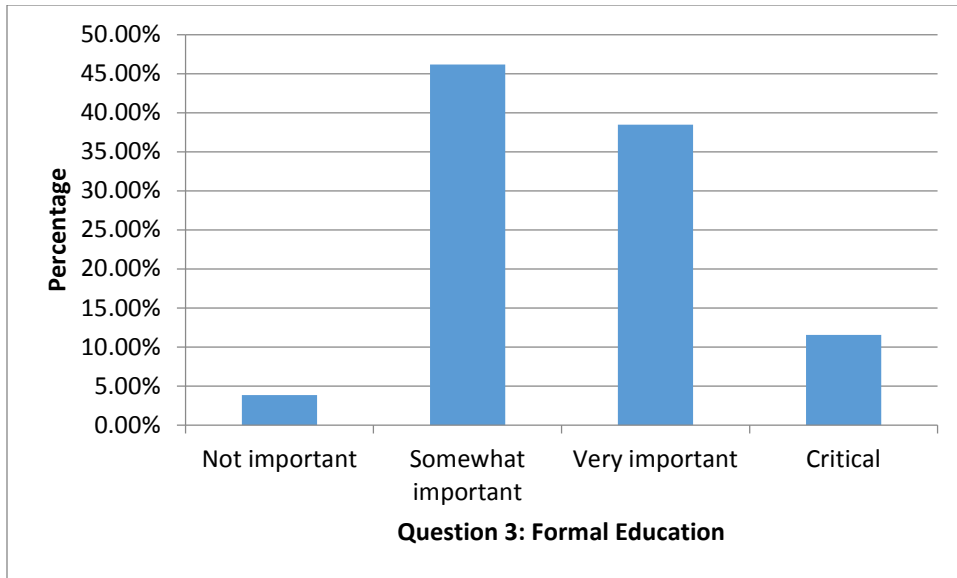
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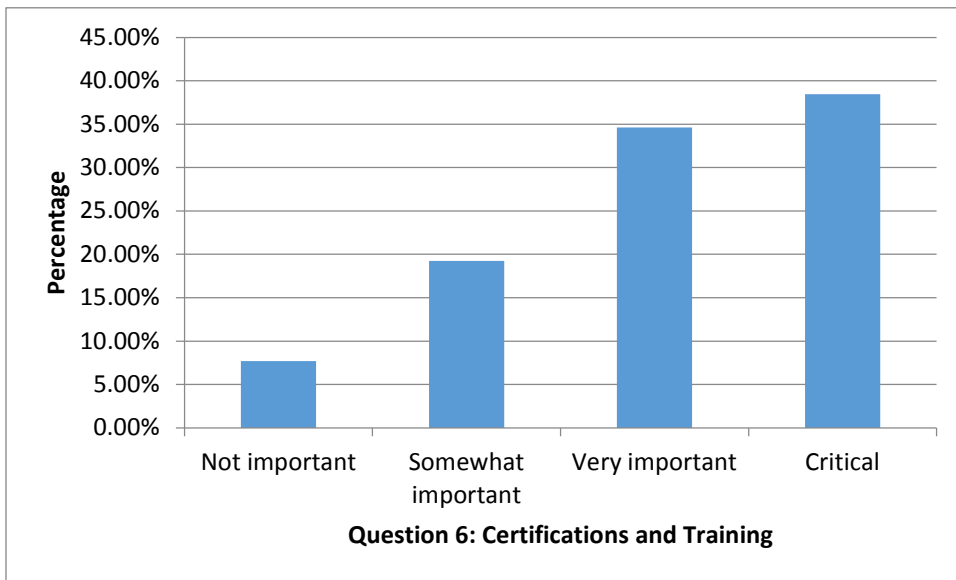
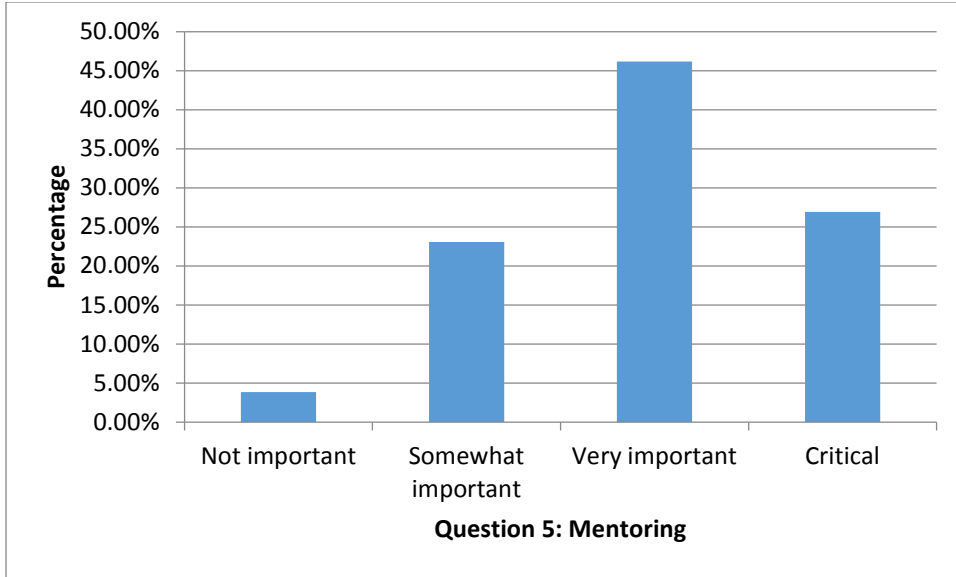
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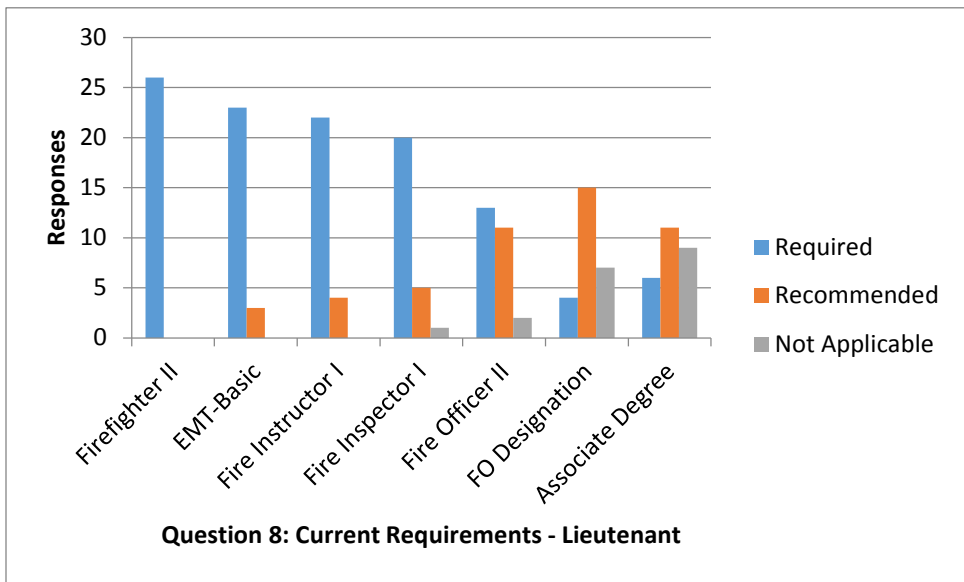
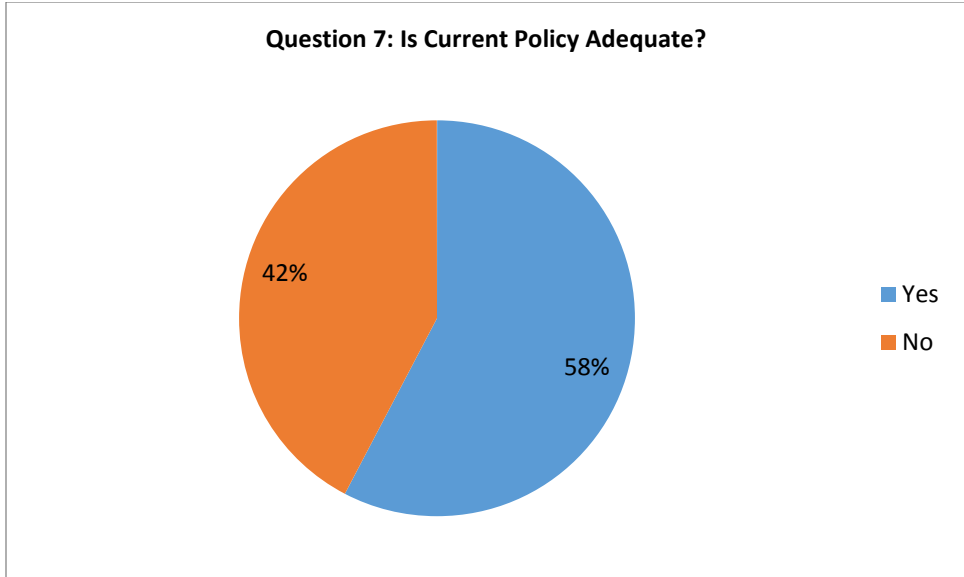
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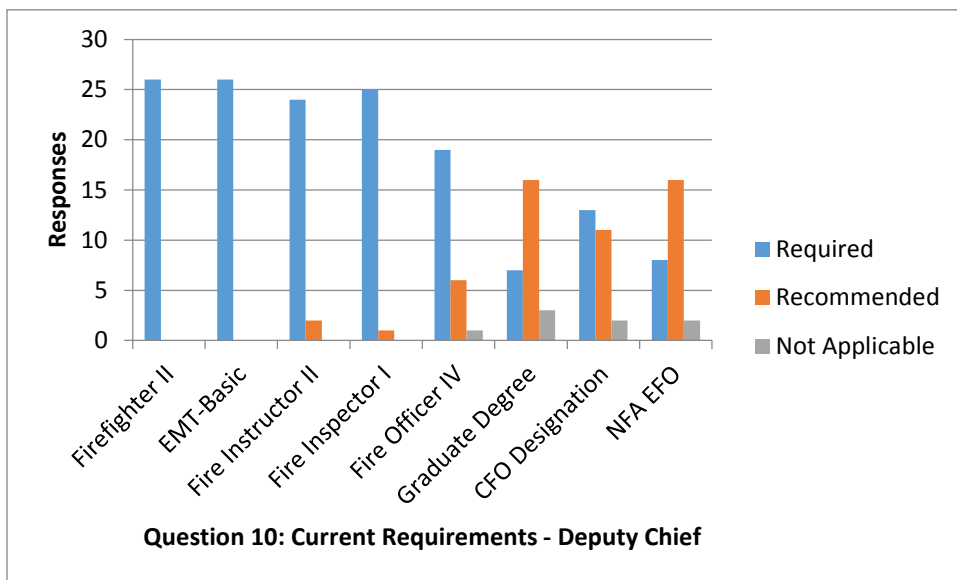
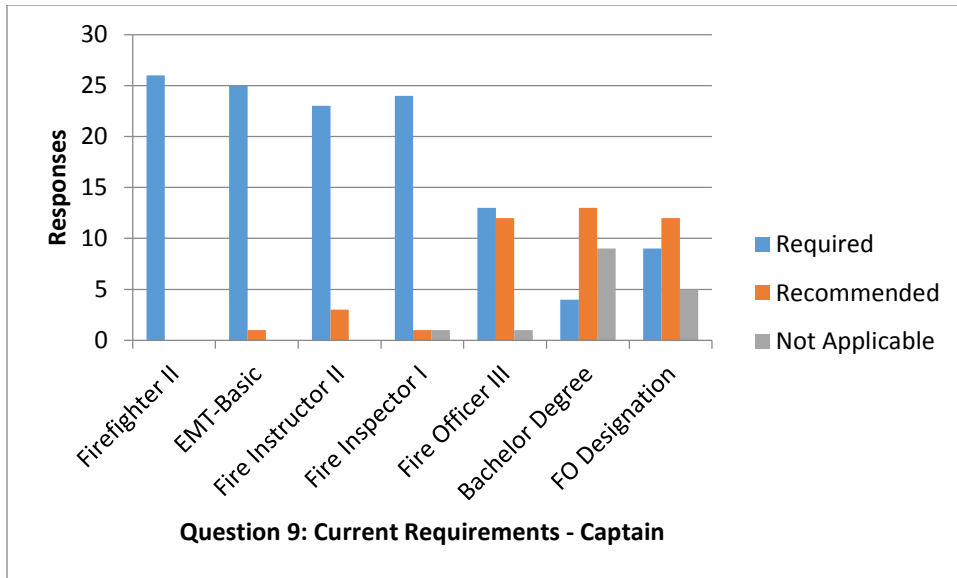
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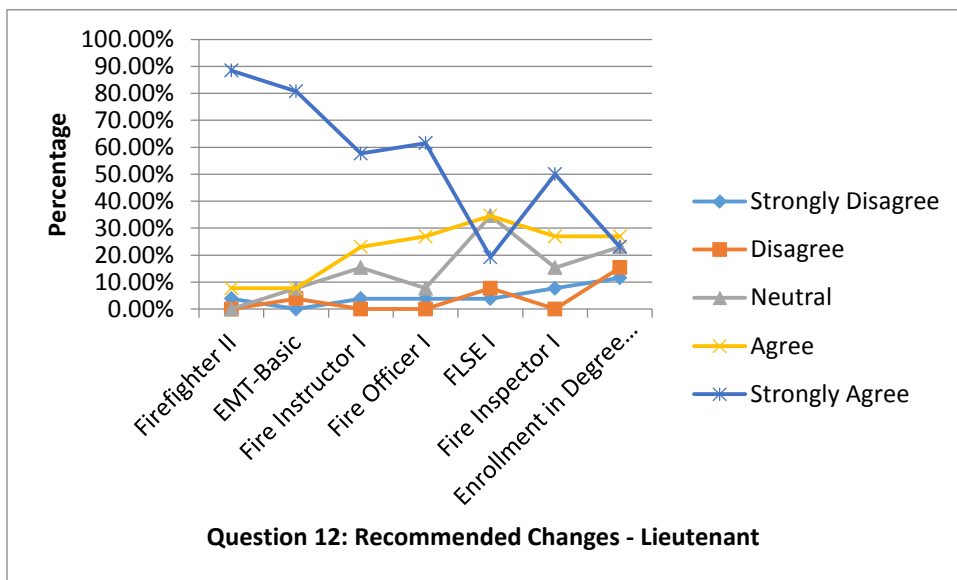
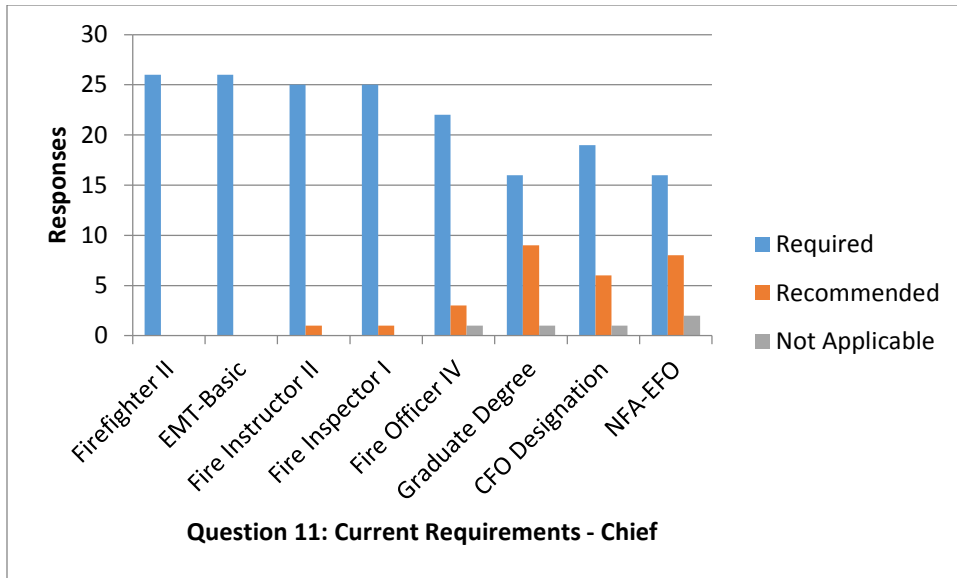


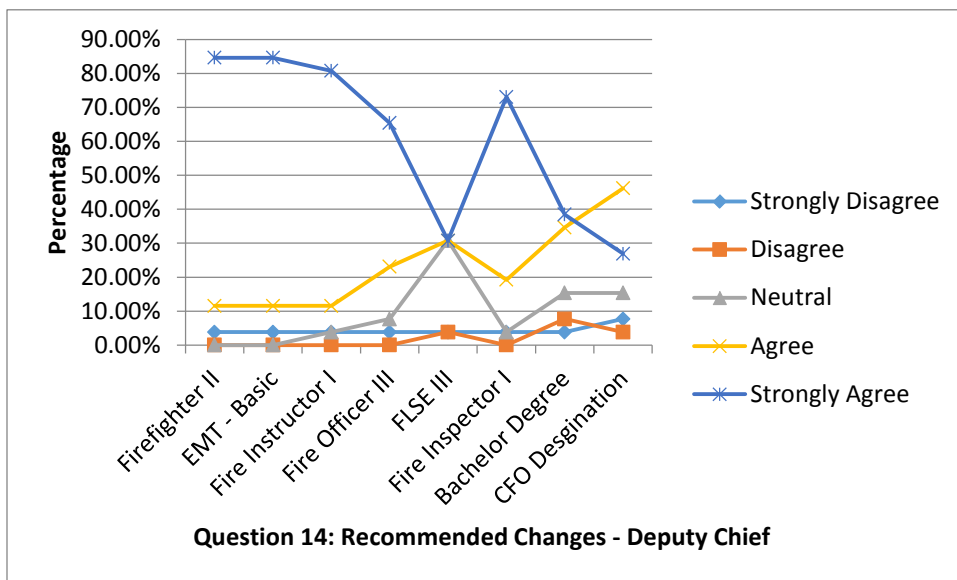
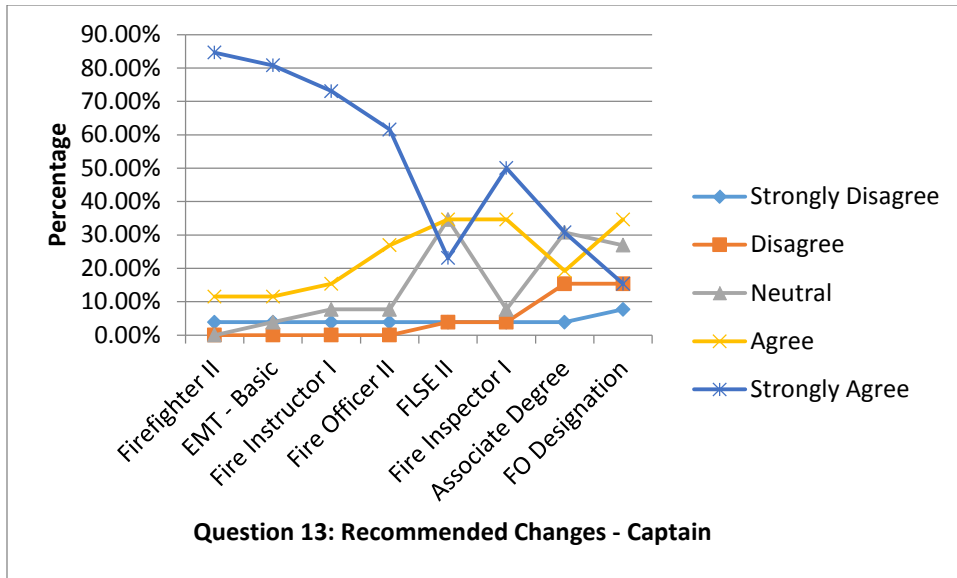


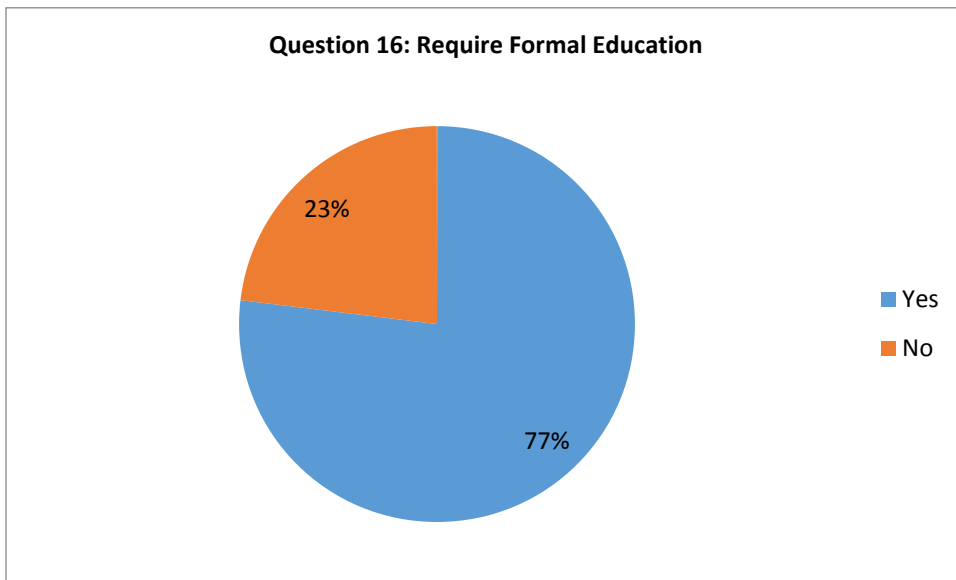
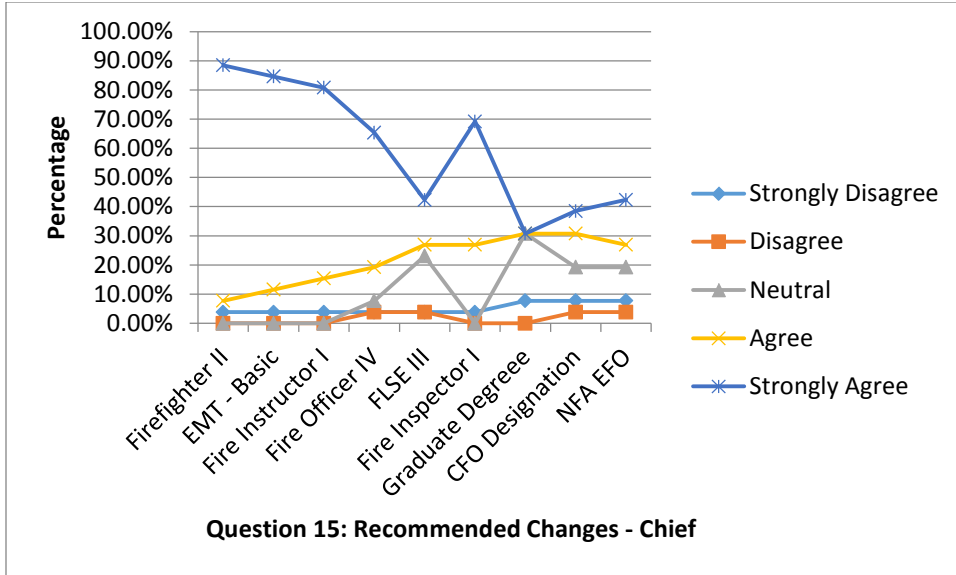


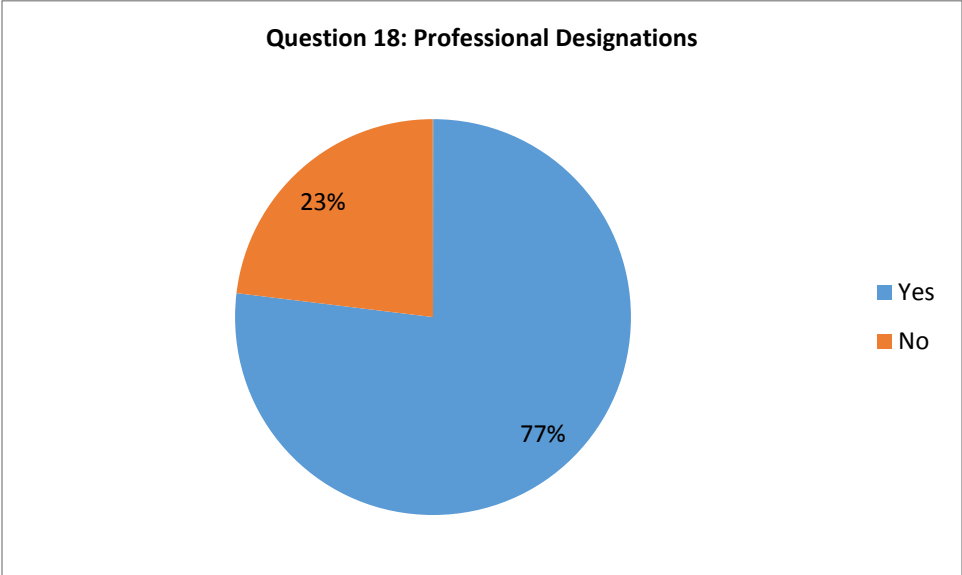
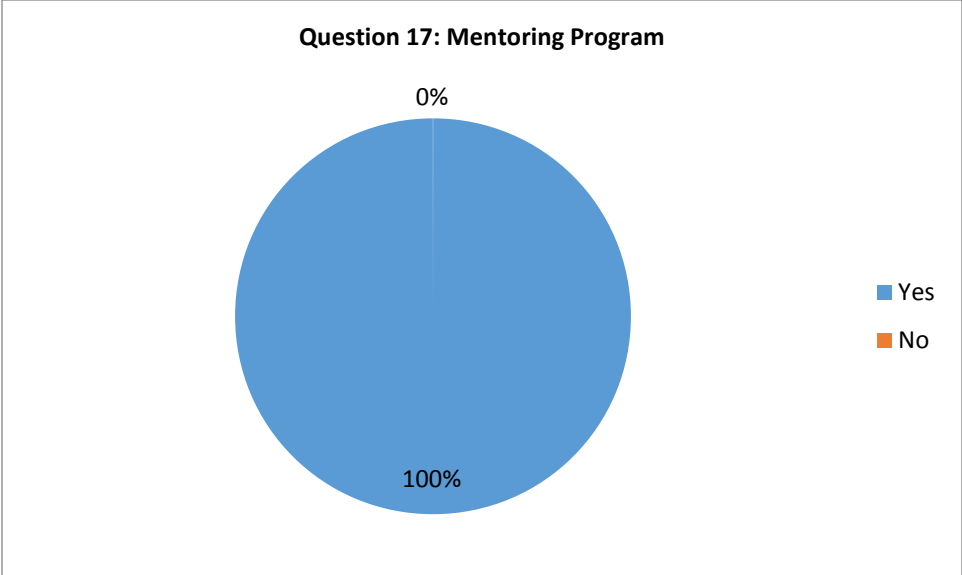


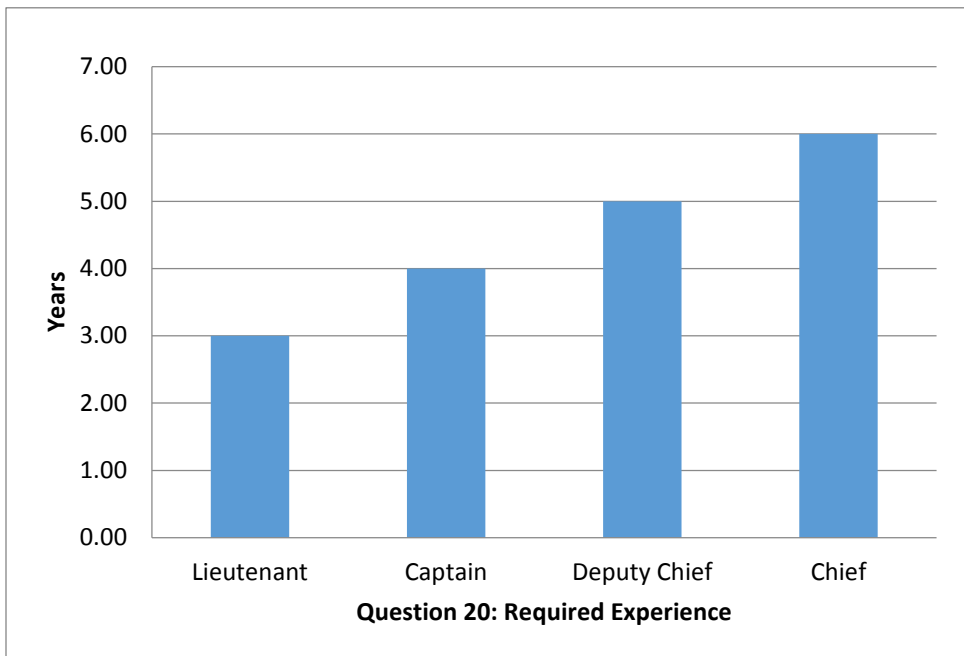
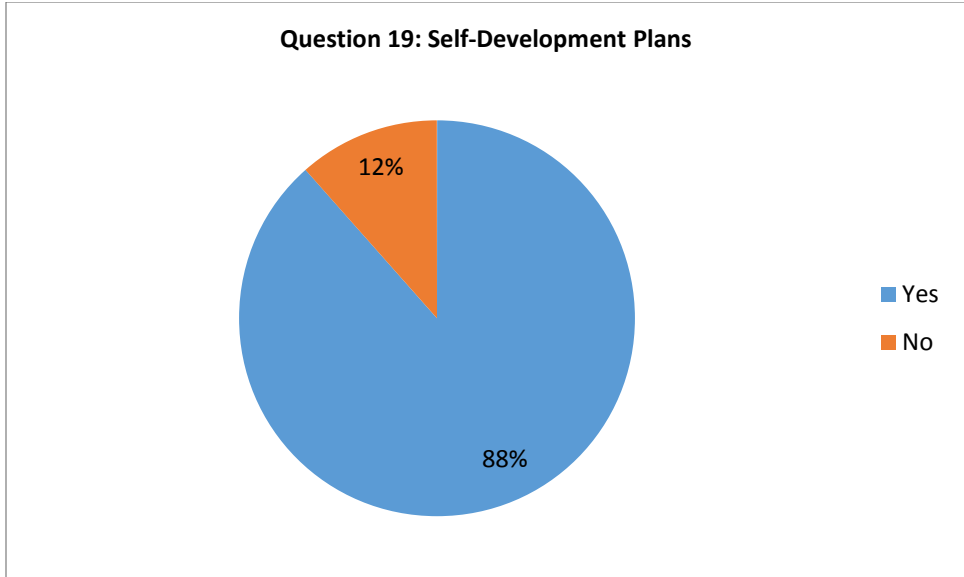












## Appendix C: Survey Email

**Internal email sent to all Hendersonville Fire Department Personnel**

To: All Personnel

From: Chief Flowers, Fire Chief

Please review and answer the short survey based on professional development. This is a component of my Applied Research Project (APR) for the Executive Fire Officer Program. When you take this survey, please remember, this is a research project to review our current career development policy and get your opinion on POSSIBLE changes to the policy based on a review of several best practices provided by various fire service resources. This survey is completely anonymous and you will not be identified in anyway. The results of this survey as well as the APR will be shared with anyone wishing to review them. Please complete this survey no later than 2/23/2014.


Please review and respond to the online survey located at:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/1552444/Professional-Development-within-the-Hendersonville-Fire-Department>

Thank you,

Chief Flowers

Appendix D: Current Career Development Standard Operating Guideline

 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>City of Hendersonville Fire Department</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINE</b></p>				
<b>Section:</b>	<b>Management And Administration</b>			<b>Fire Chief Approval</b>
<b>SOG #:</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>Issued:</b>	<b>7/9/2012</b>	<i>Adrian K. Flowers</i>
<b>Reviewed:</b>		<b>Revised:</b>		

Career Development

**1. SCOPE**

- a. This policy applies to all City of Hendersonville Fire Department personnel

**2. PURPOSE**

- a. To provide a guideline to assist personnel with professional development and explain the role of the fire department in the career development process.

**3. GENERAL**

- a. This policy will provide both required and recommended levels of training and education by position within the City of Hendersonville Fire Department.
- b. This policy is designed to assist personnel with preparing for promotions within the fire department and to assist the individual with being successful in their career.
- c. This policy does replace the individual job description for each position.

**4. PROCEDURE**

- a. Each position within the fire department will include both required training/education and recommendations for additional training and education. Training and education recommendations are designed to prepare the individual for the promotional requirements of the next position and to better prepare the individual for career success
- b. Operations Division
  - i. Firefighter
    - 1. Requirements:
      - a. Firefighter I

- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic

2. Recommendations:

- a. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- b. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- c. Driver Operator – Pumps
- d. Driver Operator – Aerials

ii. Engineer

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
- e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- g. Driver Operator – Pumps
- h. Driver Operator – Aerials

2. Recommendations:

- a. Fire Instructor I
- b. Fire Officer I
- c. Fire Inspector I

iii. Lieutenant

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
- e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- g. Driver Operator – Pumps

- h. Driver Operator – Aerials
- i. Fire Instructor I
- j. Fire Officer I
- k. Fire Inspector I

2. Recommendations:

- a. Fire Officer II
- b. Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)
- c. Associate Degree

iv. Captain

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
- e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- g. Driver Operator – Pumps
- h. Driver Operator – Aerials
- i. Fire Instructor I
- j. Fire Officer II
- k. Fire Inspector I

2. Recommended:

- a. Fire Instructor II
- b. Fire Officer III
- c. Bachelor’s Degree
- d. Fire Officer (FO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

c. Code Enforcement and Fire Prevention Division

i. Deputy Fire Marshal

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
  - b. Firefighter II
  - c. Haz-Mat Operations
  - d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
  - e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
  - f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
  - g. Fire Inspector III
  - h. Certified Arson Investigator (CAI) International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)
2. Recommendations:
    - a. Fire and Life Safety Educator I, II, III
    - b. Associate’s Degree
    - c. Fire Marshal (FM) Professional Designation Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)
- ii. Fire Marshal
1. Requirements:
    - a. Firefighter I
    - b. Firefighter II
    - c. Haz-Mat Operations
    - d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
    - e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
    - f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
    - g. Fire Inspector III
    - h. Fire and Life Safety Educator I, II, III
    - i. Associate’s Degree
    - j. Certified Arson Investigator (CAI) International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)
  2. Recommendations:
    - a. Bachelor’s Degree
    - b. Fire Marshal (FM) Professional Designation Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

d. Administration Division

i. Deputy Fire Chief

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
- e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- g. Driver Operator – Pumps
- h. Driver Operator – Aerials
- i. Fire Instructor II
- j. Fire Officer IV
- k. Fire Inspector I
- l. Bachelor’s Degree
- m. Chief Fire Officer (CFO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

2. Recommended:

- a. Executive Fire Officer (EFO) National Fire Academy (NFA)
- b. Master’s Degree

ii. Fire Chief

1. Requirements:

- a. Firefighter I
- b. Firefighter II
- c. Haz-Mat Operations
- d. Emergency Medical Technician – Basic
- e. Emergency Vehicle Driver
- f. NC Classified B Driver’s License
- g. Driver Operator – Pumps
- h. Driver Operator – Aerials
- i. Fire Instructor II

- j. Fire Officer IV
  - k. Fire Inspector I
  - l. Master's Degree
2. Recommendations:
- a. Executive Fire Officer (EFO) National Fire Academy (NFA)
  - b. Certified Fire Officer (CFO) – Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE)

## **5. RESPONSIBILITY**

- a. It is the responsibility of all department personnel to meet the required training and education for their assigned position. It is recommended that each person work to meet the recommended training and education levels listed for their assigned position.

## Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

### Hendersonville Fire Department Career Development Focus Group

#### Welcome and Introduction

- I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. I will be facilitating our discussion today. We will be taking notes of this discussion.
- The purpose of this focus group is to provide you with a set of questions derived from survey data collected to further explore specific information included in the survey.
- The purpose of a focus group is to allow you to share your views and opinions, identify differences in perspectives, and determine why those differences exist.
- There are no wrong answers. You are sharing your opinions. I expect there will be differences and I want to explore those differences. I will be asking several questions and will encourage each of you to speak. This does not mean that everyone has to answer every question.
- The complete discussion will be recorded to ensure the notes taken are accurate. Everyone's views and opinions are very valuable. This focus group will last between one and two hours. Dinner is being provided along with non-alcoholic refreshments.
- Bathrooms are located down the hall and you may use them as the need arises.

#### Ground Rules

- Please feel free to speak freely. Nothing said in this room will be shared with anyone outside of this room. We encourage and in fact want you to speak your mind.
- The notes taken will not identify you personally.
- Each of you will get a chance to speak, but please only one person speak at a time. As previously stated, your views are very valuable and we do not want to miss anything.
- Are there any questions before we get started?

#### Discussion Questions

1. Should formal education be required?
  - a. How can the City and Department support formal education?
2. What is experience and is it important to officer development?
  - a. How should experience be defined?
  - b. How do we measure experience?
3. Is mentoring important?
  - a. How would mentors be identified?
  - b. Should a mentoring program include both internal and external mentors?

#### Wrap-up

- What do you feel is the most critical component of the career development process that we have discussed today?
- Are there any additional comments?

- I appreciate you taking the time to participate in this focus group. Your comments and views will help improve our career development program and will help shape the future of the Hendersonville Fire Department.

## Appendix F: Focus Group Questions

1. Should formal education be required? How can the City and Department support formal education?
  - Participant 1
    - Must be allotted the time to earn a degree
    - People who already have degrees will feel like you must have a degree before being eligible for a specific position
    - A date should be set as a deadline to meet the requirement
    - The fire department should look at requiring formal education
    - The fire service has changed drastically and we must change with it
  - Participant 2
    - Staff earning a degree is giving back to their community by improving the level of service provided
    - There has been no real standard, but requiring a degree would help create a building block
  - Participant 3
    - A formal education offers so much more than the subjects you are dealing with such as math, etc. A formal education does expand your knowledge. “When I first went to college, I wrote a paper and when it was returned, it had more red marks than the number of words I wrote. The problem was that I wrote exactly how I spoke.”
    - The experiences that you are exposed to through a formal education are much more valuable
    - Being able to interact with some degree of intelligence is vital.
  - Participant 4
    - Must find a starting point
    - Some people have been afforded different opportunities
    - Degrees in the fire service have not gained much popularity in the local area
  - Participant 5
    - If a person wants to move up, there are things that should be required to help grow and become a leader
  - Participant 6
    - “Education is like a tool bag. You take the tool bag to work and you use the appropriate tools to do the specific job at hand”
    - Fire department historically has not supported or encouraged formal education
    - Pushing a person to earn a formal education will encourage a person to do better

- In the department, it used to be that if someone knew more than you, it was the mindset that that person was after your job
- No plan for the future
- The job is changing, you must change or be left behind
- Participant 1
  - Going to or completing classes on duty
  - Family time is important
  - Additional jobs are due to pay is a hindrance
  - Cost of the tuition is a concern, but the time is the biggest concern
  - It is human nature to resist change
  - It must be mandated
- Participant 5
  - Financial incentive for degrees
  - Current tuition reimbursement program is an incentive in and of itself
  - An incentive program is not easily defined
  - Time on shift would be beneficial
  - Need places that an employee can work on their degrees in a quiet place to study at the station
  - Requirements would be the base salary and recommendations would be incentives
- Participant 2
  - If you are going to be the bare minimum then you need to get bare minimum pay
  - Should be given an incentive
  - Time is a big issue
  - By having quiet areas would help with more than just education. It would help with other projects
- Participant 4
  - Money and time is the two driving interests in anything
  - Family and additional jobs is an issue
  - Time on shift would be important
  - Learn more from a group setting. We all learn in different ways.
  - Incentive would show commitment on the part of the city and encourage employees to earn formal education
  - Incentive should be broken up to provide motivation for continued to success in earning the degree
- Participant 5
  - Incentive for education should be given to those who earn the degree while they are employed with the department or who join the department having already earned a degree
- Participant 3
  - An incentive should be given

- Recognition of degree earned should be made. Make a production out of it
    - Set a scale for incentive program
  - Participant 6
    - Incentives encourage you to better yourself
    - Given time to earn the degree
  - Participant 2
    - Pay out incentive as courses in degree program are earned on a per semester basis
    - Pay for books
  - Participant 4
    - Pay out on schedule with annual review
    - Provide incentive based on progress within degree program
    - Pay yearly bonus for degrees similar to longevity
    - Increase tuition reimbursement pool
2. What is experience and is it important to officer development? How should experience be defined? How do we measure experience?
- Participant 1
    - There is this mentality of “I’ve had every class known to man. There is nothing that I haven’t had” and I don’t have anything else to do
    - Experience shows itself
    - We learn something everyday
    - We compare ourselves to others
    - What a person has done speaks for itself
  - Participant 5
    - It is difficult to place a time requirement on experience
  - Participant 4
    - Everyone must have confidence in the person performing the job
    - If I can’t help a person as their officer because I don’t know their job, then I am not doing my job
    - Proving your ability is as important as experience
  - Participant 1
    - Experience is based on what you have learned more than the length of time we have been on the department
    - I learned more in six months than I had in one and a half years because for the support I had at that point versus the support I had prior
  - Participant 2
    - It would be hard to track performance versus experience
    - Experience could include acting out of class

- Participant 1
  - Why does everything have to be in policy?
  - Officers have to do their job
  - The officer is responsible for ensuring their staff is prepared for their positions
- Participant 6
  - It is the engineer's job to prepare the firefighter to become an engineer for our department
  - It is the officer's job to prepare the engineer to fill the role of the officer of the truck
- Participant 4
  - Using a documented method of performance such as a task book should be implemented in order to define experience
  - If it isn't written down and documented, it didn't happen
  - The task book could also become a tool for evaluations
  - Experience could also be gained through training evolutions. It doesn't necessarily have to be operating at an actual fire
- Participant 5
  - The current way of defining experience is very subjective and open to interpretation
- Participant 4
  - There is a difference between being certified and being qualified
  - As an example, "my grandfather never learned to read or write. He could barely write his name. From the time I was about five years old, if he went anywhere and had to read something, he brought me to read it to him. But he could take a piece of equipment and build a football field at a high school where the field was out of square less than half an inch. But he could not read or write."
  - This is how I define experience
- Participant 1
  - We have to take pride in ourselves and our department
  - Focus on the job and task at hand
  - Too many people use their position at the fire department as their second job
- Participant 4
  - What if we went off of documented hours or actual training and skills usage
  - Should be competency based
  - This might be a better way of defining experience than simply requiring a number of years
  - I would be open to someone demonstrating that can do the job regardless of the number of years of experience

- It is more important to have a person demonstrate their ability within our department and with our personnel observing their abilities so that there is no question about their ability to do their job
  - Participant 1
    - We have started to develop a standard
    - We should always be striving to be number one
    - We have to start taking pride in ourselves, our department, and our jobs
  - Participant 5
    - The most recent engineer's process, we required two years of experience inside our department and three years outside our department with a department equal to or large than our department in order to be eligible for the engineer's process
  - Participant 2
    - One department may run a lot of fire while another department may run very few fires
    - It is very difficult to get the best candidate based completely on years of experience without defining what constitutes experience
  - Participant 4
    - I've never thought about taking the years of experience out of the equation and using documented hours to define experience
  - Participant 1
    - A large department may respond to more incidents, but because of the very nature of their ability to put more personnel on a scene, those personnel may have less experience than those in a smaller department where less personnel respond on an initial alarm, but have more objectives to complete
3. Is mentoring important? How would mentors be identified? Should a mentoring program include both internal and external mentors?
- Participant 1
    - We are mentoring now, even if we don't know it
    - A senior engineer has been my biggest mentor
    - The mentoring I have received has been informal
    - I don't know how to formalize it
    - Networking helps to identify possible mentors outside of the department
  - Participant 5
    - A mentoring program should include internal and external mentors
    - Internal mentors help with learning internal nuances and external mentors help with bigger picture issues that only a professional outside the department could help with because you may not want someone inside the department to know about the issue you may be dealing with at the time

- Participant 4
  - I don't know how you identify a mentor, but they are there when you need them
  - Some people can connect while others can't
  - You have to have a connection
  - Mentoring is important
- Participant 3
  - There are valuable people within our department who are worth learning from and can be internal mentors
  - Mentoring is necessary
  - How you identify these mentors, I don't know
- Participant 6
  - Anyone can be a mentor to someone on some level
  - Some people choose not to pass along their knowledge to others
  - Some individuals within our department have failed to help others become successful
  - Some people are reluctant to be mentors and share information and experience because they feel threatened and think someone is possibly out for their job
- Participant 5
  - There are already external mentoring programs in place with associations such as IAFC and I-Womens, etc.
  - Identifying mentors is an informal process and must be an individual process
- Participant 1
  - When you need a mentor, you find one
  - You have to be willing to accept mentoring
- Participant 4
  - I think mentoring would be a wonderful thing, but how to identify a mentor ahead of time, I don't know how you do that