

Wisconsin Service Award Program



Department of Administration
(608) 266-7043

Service Award Program

- The Service Award Program (formerly called the Length of Service Award Program or LOSA) is for volunteer fire fighters, first responders and emergency medical technicians.
- The program intent is to assist municipalities in retaining volunteer fire fighters, first responders and emergency medical technicians.

U. S. Fire Departments

- There are 30,000 fire departments nationwide.
- 88% of the departments are volunteer protecting 40% of the population.
- Of serving volunteers, 58% are between the ages of 30 and 49 and another 18% are older.

Wisconsin Fire Departments

The majority of the departments are volunteer:

Volunteer	81%
Combination	12%
Career	4%
Other	3%

Our Challenge

- Retention & Recruitment issues can be traced to several factors:
 - More time demands in society
 - More stringent training requirements
 - Population shifts to urban centers
 - Change in nature of small town industry
 - Internal leadership problems
 - Decline in the sense of civic responsibility
- ...Lead to turnover on Departments

U.S. Fire Administration, 2007

Our Challenge

High turnover leads to...

- **Less experience.**
 - In 2000, 40% of Wisconsin Volunteers have under 5-years
- **Increased costs.**
 - Training
 - Outfitting

...An empty supply line.

- Experience  Safety
- Officers of the Future

Service Award Goals

- Turn 5-year members into 10-year veterans and 10-year veterans into 20-year leaders.
- Provide local communities a tool to assist in Wisconsin's recruitment and retention challenges.
- Increase the value of the incentive as the value of the volunteer grows.

Who Runs the Wisconsin Service Award Program?



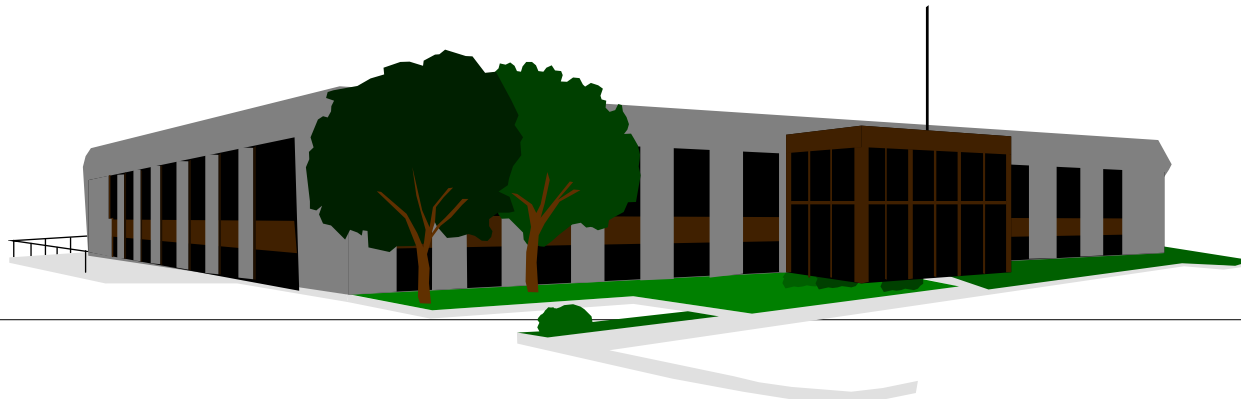
Service Award Board

- Responsibilities
 - Oversight of the administrative rule (e.g. eligibility requirements, vesting requirements, etc.)
 - Certify vendor(s) to administer the program
 - Submit annual report to the Legislature
- Composition
 - Eight (8) members
 - Appointed by the Governor
 - Staggered 3-year terms

Service Award Board

- Secretary of Department of Administration or designee
- 1 Volunteer fire fighter representing fire chiefs
- 1 Volunteer fire fighter representing fire fighters
- 1 Volunteer EMT
- 3 representatives of municipalities
- 1 person experienced in financial planning

Municipal Participation



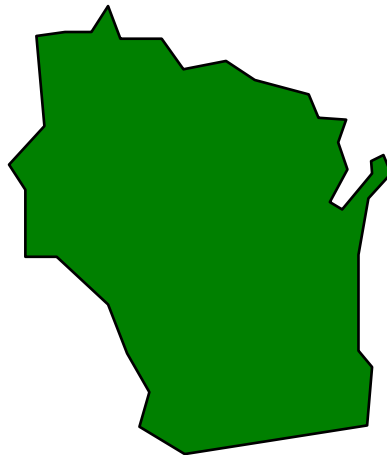
Municipal Participation

- Any city, town, village or county with volunteer fire department, contracted volunteer fire company, first responders or authorized volunteer EMTs.
- Annual municipal contribution is matched per eligible volunteer.
- Municipal participation is voluntary.

Municipal Participation

- Must pass a resolution or ordinance authorizing participation (sample on the web page).
- Must establish standards to determine service requirements for eligible participants.
- Must contract with a board-approved program administrator (vendor).
- Municipal contributions must be made by January 31 for the prior calendar year.

State Participation



State Participation

- State annually matches municipal contribution up to maximum of \$312.34 per eligible volunteer (amount adjusted annually for consumer price index).
- State will not match purchased past service.
- Limit adjusted annually for inflation.
- State total annual contribution capped at maximum of \$2 million.

Participant Benefits



Participant Benefits

- Become vested after 10 years of service
- Vesting grows with service
- Partial award available:
 - At age 60 with less than 20 years of service, or
 - With 20 years of service before age 60
- Full award available after:
 - 20 years of service, **and**
 - Reaching age 60

Participant Benefits

- Funds are forfeited if a participant terminates service prior to reaching 10 years of service credit.
- All forfeited funds are distributed pro-rata among the remaining participants for the municipality.
- Participants may transfer accrued service credits when moving between participating municipalities.

Participant Benefits

- A participant may be granted a leave of absence to preserve eligibility.
- Participants on approved leaves of absence will not forfeit their account balances.

Participant Benefits

- A volunteer who becomes disabled is eligible for an award equal to the net asset value of his or her account.
- If a volunteer dies in the line of duty or while actively engaged in rendering service, his or her beneficiary is entitled to the participant's full award.

Approved Vendors

- Volunteer Fireman's Insurance Services (VFIS) / The Horton Group
- Penflex, Inc. / UBS Financial Services
- RBC Dain Rauscher / BPA - Harbridge

Contracts through June 2010

If you would like additional program
information please
e-mail or call:

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