



Lake Country Fire and Rescue

2024 - 2026 Long-Range Staffing and Operations Plan

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Executive Summary

This document will provide internal and external stakeholders, of Lake Country Fire and Rescue (LCFR), with an in-depth analysis of the anticipated operational needs of LCFR. This document will supplement the long-range staffing document ([LINK](#)) that was released by LCFR in September of 2022 and updated again in October.

It is important to note that this plan has not been approved by Lake Country Fire and Rescue's Fire Board. This document is being prepared for the Fire Board to provide the details needed to make informed decisions.

This document uses good-faith financial projections based on experience and past historical increases. Given the current economic environment, it is difficult and irresponsible to consider these figures as "set in stone". All future budgets will be set by the fire board and forwarded to the communities using the budgeting process, as stated in LCFR's inter-municipal agreement.

This plan spells out what LCFR partner agencies should plan for the 2024, 2025, and 2026 budget years. This plan will address the ongoing staffing crisis in addition to minor program corrections that have been identified by department command staff.

2024 Highlights

- 6 full-time positions added
 - 3 converted from Intern to full-time Firefighter/Paramedic
 - 3 new Lieutenant positions
- Add a 40-hour Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT)
- Program Corrections
 - Health & Wellness Program
 - Payroll and reporting software
 - Building Furnishing account

2025 Highlights

- 6 new full-time Firefighter/Paramedic positions
- Add a Human Resource (HR) Director
- Program Corrections
 - Leadership training
 - Medical director
 - Financial management software

2026 Highlights

- 3 new full-time Firefighter/Paramedic positions
- Program Corrections
 - Tech/Communication
 - Incident reporting software
 - Public Safety Drone Program
 - Tuition Reimbursement Program
 - Accreditation

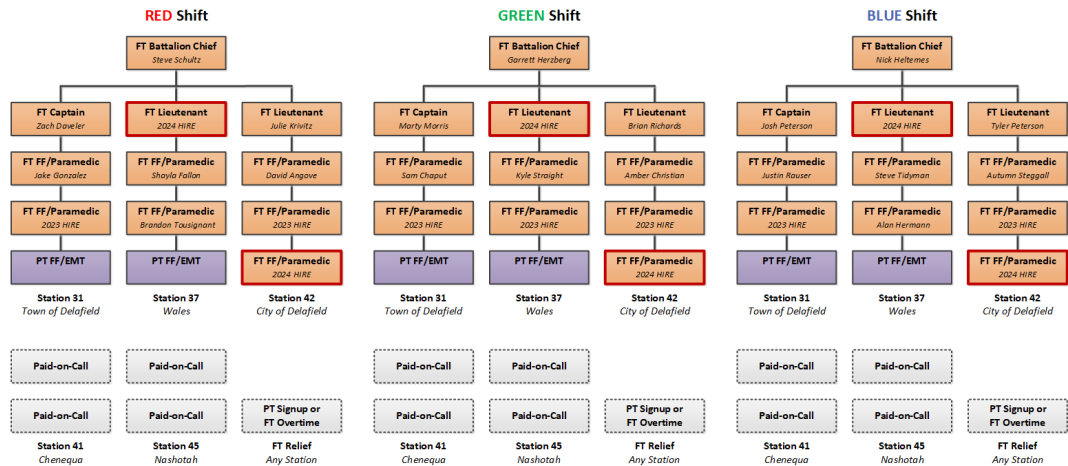
2024

The staffing plan for 2024 calls for the transition of 6 total positions on the daily schedule to paid full-time positions. 3 of the hires will be line Firefighter/Paramedic positions converted from the intern program and the other 3 will be line Lieutenant positions.

The chart below illustrates the daily staffing model. Boxes outlined in red indicate positions that are proposed to change in 2024.



LCFR Operational Staffing Plan - 2024



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After the implementation of the plan, the intern positions will no longer be part of the daily schedule. With that, the LCFR command staff and the fire board must decide the future of the intern program. The benefits of the program include increased daily staffing levels, developing our own talent, and increased response from the Nashotah station. The total budgeted amount in the 2023 budget for the intern program is \$180,000.

The line Lieutenant positions will be housed at LCFR Station 37 and will be used to bring LCFR into compliance with State of Wisconsin SPS 330 laws. SPS 330 ([LINK](#)) requires an officer to oversee and manage fire apparatus, something LCFR cannot currently guarantee.

The long-range plan also calls for the creation of a full-time Emergency Vehicle Technician (EVT) position. This cross-trained position will be hired at the Firefighter/EMT level and will be assigned to a 40-hour work week. Currently, the department operates a fleet of vehicles that is valued at over \$6 million. This EVT would be responsible for keeping the fleet in a constant state of readiness. This includes not only performing preventative maintenance (PM) tasks such as oil changes, pump

tests, and pump PMs but also performing repairs on an as-needed basis. Currently, the department handles very minor things in-house and sends the remainder of these service issues out to a provider that is 45 minutes away. This provider has a current labor rate of \$135 per hour. Long term, this position will result in savings to the department in the way of decreased overall costs and decreased downtime to the agency, with an end goal of increased longevity of our fleet. As with any long-term investment, this position will require an initial investment from the agency for training and equipment. This will be paid for using the department's current maintenance budget. This position is one that, over time, could potentially be shared with our partner communities to maintain municipal fleet and other non-scheduled maintenance.

LCFR command staff is recommending 3 program corrections for 2024. These program corrections include instituting an employee health and wellness program, enhancing the functionality of our payroll system, and adding to the building furnishing account that was created in 2023.

LCFR has needed an employee health and wellness program since it was created in 2010. To date, this program is requested at the staff level every year. It has not made it to the final budget because the department consistently puts every available dollar into increasing staffing. An employee health and wellness program is required by NFPA 1582. NFPA 1582 calls for physicals on a routine basis. The initial plan drafted by staff included physical examinations every year (\$350 per employee), totaling \$18,200. After some discussion, it was decided that a good starting point for the physicals would be for them to occur every other year which will result in a \$9,100 savings. Aside from physical examinations, the program will also include \$5,200 for mental health. These dollars will allow for post-incident check-ins with LCFR's mental health providers at \$200 per employee. These check-ins will be used on an as-needed basis following incidents that are traumatic in nature.

The request to enhance the payroll system is a direct reflection of the increase in full-time staff. As the agency grows, so do the reporting requirements set forth by the Federal Government. The additional \$5,000 in this category will be used to handle the myriad of reports that are now required.

Lastly, the request for 2024 is to increase the building furnishings account by \$5,000. This account was created in 2023 to repair and replace furnishings in the fire stations. Before 2023, there was no money earmarked for furnishings and money was spent using other accounts. As the buildings continue to age, it is important LCFR has funds available to repair and replace items.

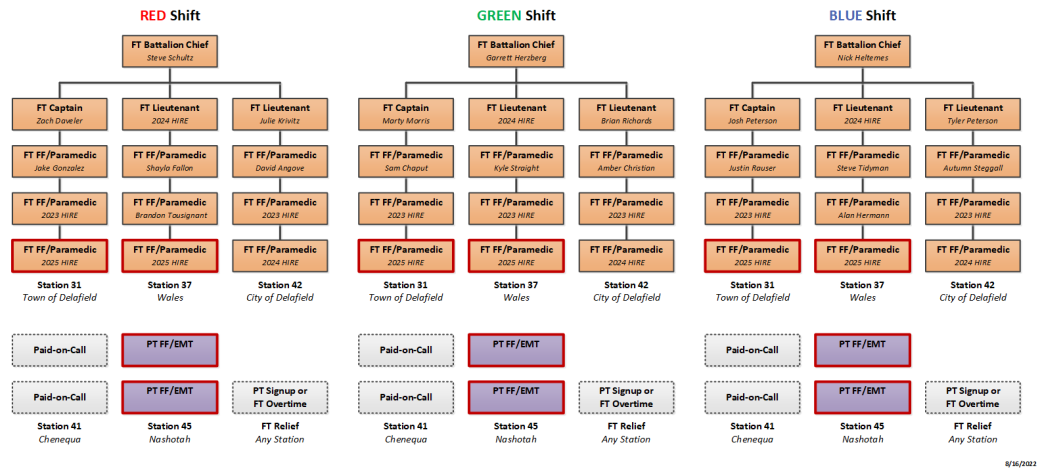
2025

The staffing plan for 2025 calls for 6 of the positions on the daily schedule to be converted from part-time positions to full-time positions. At this point, all the positions on the LCFR daily schedule will be full-time. Part-time staff will play a large role in filling sick and vacation days. Allowing part-time staff to fill these openings will reduce overtime expenditures. Part-time staff will also be utilized to fill shifts at the Nashotah station. This station has ideal access to our northern response area because of its proximity to Hwy 16. Communities have asked for this station to be staffed more regularly but due to lack of funding, has never happened. Statistically, responses to our northern area are approximately 35% higher when compared to our southern area. The reason for this is purely geographical.

The chart below illustrates the daily staffing model. Boxes outlined in red indicate positions that are proposed to change in 2025



LCFR Operational Staffing Plan – 2025



The plan for 2025 also calls for the creation of an HR professional position. An HR professional will be needed to professionally manage the department's new full-time headcount of 51 personnel. This person would oversee the department's hiring processes as well as provide direction on promotional processes and discipline. Most importantly, this professional would also oversee the employee wellness programs that were created in 2024, including mental health. The mental health side of our industry right now is suffering and is imperative that we protect our staff. Once off the ground, this position is potentially one that could be shared with our 7 owner communities, should they require professional HR. The details of this would need to be worked out in a formal agreement between LCFR and the communities

There are 3 program corrections in the plan for 2025. These program corrections include an increase in the investment in leadership training, adding funds for a paid medical director, and increasing funds for the departments' financial management software.

Leadership training is proposed to increase by \$5,000. This increase will go into further development of the departments' officer cadre and will provide them with formal training on how to not only properly manage scenes but to properly manage their subordinates. This funding was originally requested as part of the 2022 and 2023 budgets but was cut during the budget process.

Having a paid Medical Director is long overdue in our system. This is another area requested by the department's EMS leadership but has been cut out of the budget because of constraints. To date, LCFR is one of a few departments remaining in Waukesha County that does not pay our medical director. While our current medical director is doing a fine job of meeting our needs, we must plan for a day when they are no longer willing to do it for free. The request is for a new line item to be created in the amount of \$20,000.

The last program correction for 2025 is to add \$5,000 to the department's financial management software account. Currently, the department is using a limited version of Quickbooks, which is extremely inefficient. The current version does not allow for multiple users and the reporting capability is very limited. The allocation of these funds allows for the departments' administrative team to explore other options. These options could include an upgrade to the existing software or switching software, as recommended by our auditor.

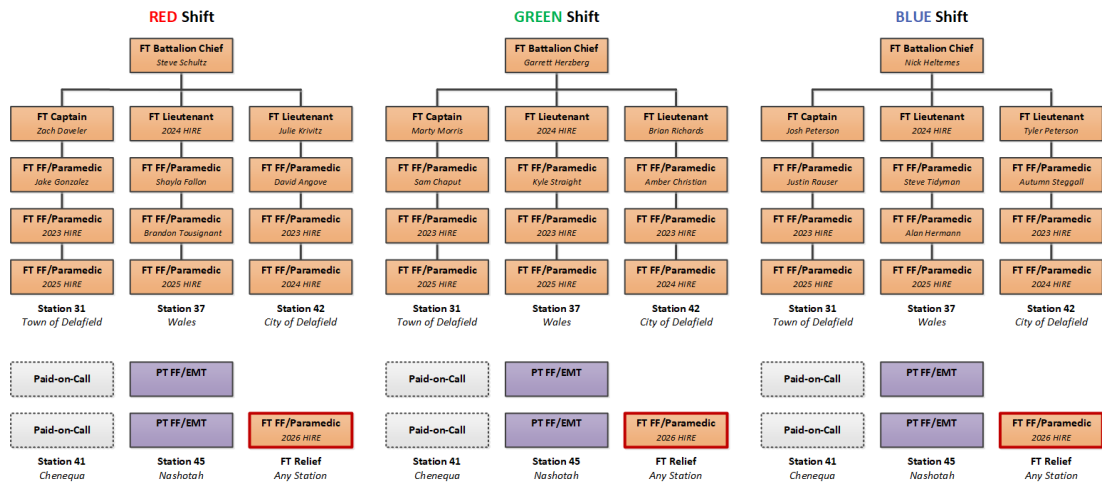
2026

2026 is the final year of this plan and includes adding 3 full-time positions to the daily schedule. These 3 positions will add 1 person per shift who will be used to cover the approximately 450-500 vacation/sick/FMLA days that occur on an annual basis. This is being done for 2 reasons. The first is a cost-savings measure and the second is to reduce employee fatigue and burnout. This practice is followed by nearly every career fire agency, with most having 2 or 3 positions every shift to cover vacation/sick/FMLA vacancies.

The chart below illustrates the daily staffing model. Boxes outlined in red indicate positions that are proposed to change in 2026.



LCFR Operational Staffing Plan - 2026



8/16/2022

2026 calls for program corrections and enhancements in tech/communications, fire/EMS reporting software, funds to become an accredited agency, creation of a regional public safety drone program, increase the training fund, and bringing back the departments' tuition reimbursement program.

The tech and communication account will be completely revamped to follow a replacement schedule that will include the funds necessary to keep the department's information technology and communication equipment current in terms of cyber security and hardware replacement. Previous replacement schedules did not include or have the capacity for the current connected environment that we live in. LCFR understands that the connected environment will look different 4 years from now. This replacement plan positions the department in a place where we will be able to replace computers, servers, broadband routers, mobile data computers, and patient care computers on a schedule that meets federal cyber security requirements for government entities and HIPPA security guidelines.

The plan also calls for an enhancement to the department's incident reporting software. This enhancement will position the agency in a better place for pre-incident planning, performance tracking, inventory management, fire inspections, and incident reporting. This software will also be needed if the department pursues accreditation.

Accreditation is the next item on the list of program corrections. Accreditation is quickly becoming the gold standard for fire and EMS departments across the country as it vets the departments' service delivery against national standards. Accreditation also sets the direction for the next 5 – 10 years. Throughout the process in 2022, the one thing that we have heard loud and clear is the need for the future to be more transparent and planned out. Accreditation does exactly that.

The need for a public safety drone program is quickly emerging. Technology has advanced in the past 5 years in this arena and will continue to do so to the point where these devices will quickly become something that gets used in every large incident. We can look back in history and can draw a comparison to how thermal imaging cameras evolved in the late 1990s and are now standard on every front-line fire apparatus and command vehicle. We believe that this program will evolve similarly, and as such, have placed it in our 5-year plan.

The last 2 requests in the 5-year plan are to increase the training account and re-establish a tuition reimbursement account. The department is growing rapidly and needs to have the funds necessary to train our youthful staff. Training builds the next generation of leaders. For any agency to be successful, it needs to have a succession plan. These two accounts help develop our succession plan.