



News Release

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Rockford Fire Selected to Participate in Nationwide Community Risk Reduction Pilot Program

ROCKFORD, Ill. - The Rockford Fire Department was recently selected by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) to participate in the second phase of a pilot program to build a digital community risk assessment (CRA) tool. Aligned to NFPA 1300, *Standard on Community Risk Assessment and Community Risk Reduction Plan Development*, the tool, or “dashboard,” enables community leaders to gain valuable insights and make data-informed decisions around fire prevention and other risk-reduction activities in their communities.

According to NFPA, the concept of community risk reduction (CRR) - a process that identifies and prioritizes risks and ensures impactful mitigation initiatives- has been gaining traction across North America for more than 20 years. Innovative technology, access to data, and a shifting focus on prevention have resulted in new energy around this process. Reflecting that momentum, NFPA’s CRA tool works to help fire departments aggregate and disseminate data that pinpoint where risks exist within a given community.

“Access to accurate data will allow CRR leaders to use insights and make informed decisions about where to focus efforts and resources,” said Karen Berard-Reed, community risk reduction strategist at NFPA. “While many fire departments have struggled to work with data sets, NFPA’s CRA tool will do the complex work behind the scenes to compile relevant data allowing stakeholders to create effective community risk reduction plans that incorporate five priorities - education, engineering, enforcement, economic incentives, and emergency response - in the most impactful ways possible.”

The first phase of the pilot project, which included participation from 50 fire departments across the country, helped identify features of the digital dashboard that will work effectively and those that need fine-tuning. During the second phase of the program, which involves participation from 250 departments nationwide, the Rockford Fire Department will provide insights around the use of dashboard through June of 2021 to help continue refining and enhancing its effectiveness.

“Participation in this project allows each fire department to provide important feedback that will be used to improve future versions of the dashboard, positions the community among CRR leaders in the United States, and signals an interest in leveraging technology to drive high-quality community safety initiatives,” said Berard-Reed.

As a participant in the pilot program, Rockford Fire Department will have free access to the dashboard, which includes customized visualizations (maps, charts, graphs) that illustrate each community’s risks and hazards across a variety of categories such as demographics, geography, building stock, economics, infrastructure, and event loss history. The dashboard also provides a snapshot of local capacity for risk reduction activities with information about public safety response agencies and community service organizations. In addition to dashboard access, participants will be provided rich networking and professional development opportunities with other communities engaged in CRR.

“We are thrilled to be participating in this important project,” said Division Chief Matthew Knott. “Not only will access to the tool give us invaluable information about our community’s needs, but it’s rewarding to know that using the tool will increase its effectiveness and help other fire departments in the long run.”

Follow NFPA’s CRR efforts on social media using #itstartswithinsights, or for more information online, visit www.nfpa.org/crr.

About the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Founded in 1896, NFPA® is a global self-funded nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. For more information, visit www.nfpa.org. All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at www.nfpa.org/freeaccess.

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