



## Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety

Cabinet Secretary Jeff S. Sandy, CFE, CAMS

State Fire Marshal Kenneth E. Tyree, Jr.

Phone: (304) 558-2191

Fax: (304) 558-2537

### OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

1207 Quarrier St, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

Charleston, WV 25301

[www.firemarshal.wv.gov](http://www.firemarshal.wv.gov)

# 2018 SB 625 Report Survey for West Virginia County Governments

## FROM THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE FIRE MARSHAL

In 2018, the West Virginia Legislature directed our agency to produce a report based on Senate Bill 625. This report requires an assessment of multiple aspects of the fire service, such as the following:

(1) Recommendations regarding recommended state oversight of the State's such fire services; financial support for fire services, a plan and timeline for transitioning responsibility and oversight to the counties; and county authority, oversight, and accountability of operations, fiscal planning, financial accountability, and risk management planning. We feel that the following information will assist and contribute to the said report. **(Please Note: It is not anticipated that any authority that the State Fire Commission and State Fire Marshal's Office currently has would be transferred to the said counties):**

(a) An assessment of all current funding received by the volunteer fire companies and departments, and a further assessment of the funding necessary to provide the community protections required for the areas served by the volunteer fire companies and departments, the extent to which those needs are being met, the extent to which they are not being met, and recommendations of sources of funds to meet additional needs and the amounts needed, if any;

(b) An assessment of the cost of workers' compensation coverage for the volunteer fire companies and departments and recommendations for any actions that may be undertaken by the volunteer fire companies and departments and others to reduce those costs;

(c) An assessment of the level of financial accountability that should be required of volunteer fire companies and departments in order to provide the Legislature the information necessary to target future funding for their activities based upon the safety and fire protection needs of the various areas of the state;

(d) An assessment of the comparative levels of funding for volunteer fire companies and departments provided by counties, municipalities and other political subdivisions and the means by which that funding is provided, including identification of those which contribute little or no funding to the volunteer fire companies and departments within their jurisdictions, together with recommendations for increasing those levels of contributions;

(e) An assessment of the comparative levels of funding for volunteer fire companies and departments provided by their own efforts, and the means by which that funding is provided, including identification of those which provide little or no funding through their own efforts, together with recommendations for increasing these sources of funding;

(f) An assessment of the comparative economic and other benefits provided by the various volunteer fire companies and departments to their counties, municipalities and other political subdivisions, as well as to citizens of the local communities they serve;

(g) An assessment of all current liabilities (debt) sustained and the mechanisms and timeline used to repay such liabilities; and

(h) Other assessments and recommendations which the State Fire Marshal and Stakeholders deems appropriate in the circumstances.

In an effort to meet the requirements of this law in a cost-effective manner, we have developed the attached Survey Report Questionnaire. We are confident you will find it relatively easy to complete. It is my personally desire this survey ultimately works to the benefit of the fire service community of West Virginia.

\*\*\*\*\* This survey is not mandatory to fulfill the requirements of the Legislature and is requested to be completed and returned by **October 12, 2018**. \*\*\*\*\*

Your response will only be used for statistical purposes to give vital data for the State Fire Marshal's Office to provide a report to the Legislature. The reporting burden for this survey is estimated to average approximately one (1) hour per response. You may use reasonably close estimates if book figures are not readily available. Please keep in mind, the accuracy of the data you provide will directly impact the validity of the conclusions provided to the Legislature.

I greatly appreciate your assistance and **THANK YOU** in advance for ensuring that the results of this survey are comprehensive, timely, and reliable.

Sincerely,

Kenneth E. Tyree Jr.  
State Fire Marshal

CC: W.Va. State Fire Commission

Visit [www.firemarshal.wv.gov](http://www.firemarshal.wv.gov)

- To get help with reporting
- For a fillable electronic version to be printed and returned upon completion
- To answer questions about this survey or the office



# Survey Report Questionnaire

**Prepared by:** [Name]  
[Title]

**Address:**

**County:**

**Phone:**

**Mobile Phone:**

**E-mail:**

**Date:**

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NOTE: Please attach additional sheets to answer any of the following questions if necessary. Again, if you have the exact information readily available, please provide the same. If, however, you do not have this information, you may provide reasonable estimates to answer the questions.

## ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

### Profile

County Commission President:

County Manager (if applicable):

Number of County Employees:

Does the Department/County have current Bylaws for Fire Departments within your County and are they actively followed and enforced:

### General Information

#### Type of Fire Dept. Organizations within County

County (Paid)

Corporation/Incorporated (Paid)

County (Volunteer)

Corporation/Incorporated  
(Combination)

Municipal (Paid)

Corporation/Incorporation (Vol.)

Municipal (Combination)

Other

#### Total Number of Stations/Substations

#### Comments

1    2    3    4 or more

### Detailed Information

Mailing address:

Primary Physical Address:

Primary phone:

E-mail:

Number of all calls dispatched within the County in 2017:

Number responded to:

Structure/Vehicle Fires:

Vehicle Crashes/Technical Rescues:

Medical Calls:

Other:

Percentage of members holding full time  
employment:

Percentage of members holding part  
time employment:

Number of members receiving social security retirement, social security disability, workers' compensation, or other entitlement supplemental income?

## FUNDING/INCOME SOURCES

Specific Funding Sources of Fire Dept. (if known)			
Source	Yes	Amount Received	Amount Needed
Federal Appropriations	<input type="checkbox"/>		
State Appropriations	<input type="checkbox"/>		
County Fire Fee	<input type="checkbox"/>		
County Fire Levy	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other County Allocation	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Municipal Allocations	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Federal Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other Grant	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Unsolicited Donations	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Solicited Donations	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Fundraising Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Bingo, photography or other service exchanged fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Ambulance / EMS Services	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>		
List any comment you may have to explain the above information:			

## OPERATIONAL RESOURCES/EXPENDITURES

Current Assets of Fire Departments (if known)	
Total checking account balance: \$	Bank:
Total savings account balance: \$	Bank:
Value of stocks and bonds: \$	
Value of real estate owned: \$	
Value of personal property/equipment: \$	
Value of vehicle(s): \$	
Other current assets: \$	
<b>Total asset value:</b> \$	

Current Liabilities of Fire Departments (if known)	
Real estate mortgage loan amount: \$	Annual Cost: \$
improvement or other loan amount: \$	Annual Cost: \$
Charge accounts (include all account balances): \$	Annual Cost: \$
Vehicle loan amount(s): \$	Annual Cost: \$
Workers' Compensation Premiums: \$	Annual Cost: \$
All other liabilities (e.g. utilities, insurance, repairs, maintenance, etc.): \$	Annual Cost: \$
	<b>Total Annually: \$</b>

Do you or would you support any of the below Incentives? If so, please mark all applicable.

**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION Incentives for Fire Departments**

Recruitment	Retention
<input type="checkbox"/> Salaried Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Salaried Compensation
<input type="checkbox"/> Hourly Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Hourly Compensation
<input type="checkbox"/> Per-call Compensation	<input type="checkbox"/> Per-Call Compensation
<input type="checkbox"/> Gifts or other tangible items in exchange for work	<input type="checkbox"/> Gifts or other tangible items in exchange for work
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Please detail attempts and costs of these programs:	

**FINANCIAL AND LOSS PREVENTION ACCOUNTABILITY**

Financial Accountability	
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Audit by State Legislative Auditor	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Audit by State Auditor's Office (Municipality Only)	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Audit by other Governmental Auditor (if any)	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Last Audit by Independent Auditor or CPA	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Last In-house (uncertified) Financial Audit	Date:
<input type="checkbox"/> Findings of Audit(s). Specify:	

**Financial Record Keeper/Financial Program Used**

Name:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Comments on Program Used/Other Comments:

**Risk Analysis / Loss Prevention**

Does the County/department have a Health, Safety or Health/Safety Officer: Y / N

Is that person responsible for only scene safety or general safety and welfare of the membership: Y / N

Who is designated as being responsible for safe practices for department:

Does the County/Department have a loss prevention program: Y / N

What steps could/does your department/county take to reduce injuries and losses :

Does your Workers Compensation Insurance Carrier require you have a Risk Management Plan?

**Workers' Compensation Specific Information**

Number of Workers' Compensation Claims Filed in 2017:

W/C Claims in last 10 years:

Number of 2017 claimants who did not return to work:

Number of claimants in 10 year period who did not return:

Comments:

**COMMUNITY ORIENTED BENEFITS****Community Benefits Derived**

What was your last ISO review date:

ISO ratings received:

**Other**

## Other Questions:

1. Would you support the transfer of VFDs to be placed under County oversight?
2. If Yes, what do you see as the advantage of such a process? Please provide a detailed explanation.
3. If No, what do you see as the disadvantage of such a process? Please provide a detailed explanation.
4. What would it take for you to support such a transfer? Provide Detailed Parameters of acceptance.
5. Would you prefer the transfer to be limited to County's oversight/service provided?
6. With allowance of the continuance of each department's non-profit status?
7. Would you support a legislative move to permit the establishment of Fire Protection Districts within your said County? **SFMO Provide Explanation of Fire Protection Districts.**
8. Would county oversight of Fire Dept. within each county help in the Recruitment and Retention issue? Provide details of how it could or would not enhance these efforts.
9. Do you feel that county oversight would improve call response capabilities? If yes, please elaborate.
10. Do you feel that county oversight would strengthen staffing levels overall?
11. Are you currently using any type of financial management program or a Third Party Financial Mgt program? If so, what form/financial management program is being used?
12. What would be the Advantage and Disadvantage of Dept's full financial disclosure including their total DEBT liabilities?
13. Do you feel such a transfer of VFDs to county oversight, would necessitate additional staffing within the county? If so, please provide details.
14. How would you propose to fund the additional staffing?
15. What additional transfers of authority do you feel, would be necessary to properly oversee fire departments?
16. Would you feel that distribution/disbursement that is currently provided to VFDs through the Insurance Premium Tax be continued?
17. If so, should that said disbursement be continued to each of the said departments or be distributed to the counties for disbursement? Please provide detailed opinion.
18. Are there any thoughts on what that disbursement should be based on; completion of incident reports, calls dispatched, call responses, etc.?



19. What type of funding would be needed to facilitate such a transfer within your county?
20. Do you currently have a funding mechanism such as a County Levy or Fire Fee?
21. If you do not, would you support such a mechanism or even consider the establishment of Fire Protection Districts within your county? Please provide details.
22. In your opinion should the authority of the county for providing fire services be mandatory (shall) or permissive (may) language?
23. Does your county assist volunteer fire departments?  Yes  No  NA
24. How does your county assist volunteer fire departments?  
a.  Levy  General  Coal Severance  Other
25. How many volunteer fire departments in your county?
26. How many volunteer fire departments in city limits?
27. Does your county have contract agreements, service agreements, or memorandum of understanding with the departments in your county?  Yes  No
28. Any current oversight in place for the county departments?  Yes  No
29. Does the county commission have any skill set or knowledge in managing a volunteer department?  Yes  No
30. Does your county Commission have any accountability of inventory of each department?  
Yes No
31. Does your fire department have an accountability committee?  Yes  No
32. Does your fire department audit all accounts or certain account?  Yes  No  
Please Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
33. Does your corporate officer have any business training?  Yes  No
34. Would your department be agreeable to be transferred to your county Commission?  
Yes  No  Please Explain:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
35. Does your department have monthly corporate officer meetings?  Yes  No
36. How much debt does your department have? \_\_\_\_\_ Loans \_\_\_\_\_ Leases

37. Do you feel there needs to be additional items added to the allowed expenditures of the State disbursed monies as identified in WV Code 8-15-8b? If so, what?

38. Would you be in favor of continuing or the establishment of a County Fire Board in your said county?

39. Would you be in favor of the transfer of all assets and liabilities of each volunteer fire department within your county under the proposed transfer of oversight? Please share the advantages and disadvantages of such a transfer:

If you have any other comments, suggestions, or details, which you believe may be useful in providing the Legislature a full and complete understanding of the West Virginia Fire Service, please let us know:

**Please note: You may use a separate sheet of paper for any answers you may provide that do not fit below the said question. Please place the number of the question beside that answer given.**