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## BUDGET UNIT BRIEF – FY 2024

Fiscal Services Division

July 1, 2023



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Ground Floor, State Capitol Building

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.281.3566

## Fire Fighter Training

### Purpose and History

State training for Iowa fire fighters began in 1925 with the creation of the Iowa State Fire School at Iowa State College, which is today Iowa State University. In 2000, fire fighter training was transferred to the Fire Service Training Bureau of the Division of State Fire Marshal of the Department of Public Safety (DPS). In 2020, the Fire Service Training Bureau relocated from Iowa State University to Camp Dodge in Johnston.

Volunteer and career fire fighters serve at fire stations throughout Iowa. Some volunteer fire fighters are considered “paid on call,” meaning they receive modest compensation for responding to incidents. The State minimum training standards apply to both volunteer and career fire fighters.

Volunteer fire fighters employed by the State, except those considered “essential personnel,” have a leave provision and job protection pursuant to Iowa Code section [55.2](#). This allows State fire fighters to respond to fire calls with job protection. Iowa Code section [100B.14](#) provides volunteer job protection and prohibits a public or private employer from terminating the employment of an employee for joining a volunteer emergency services unit or organization.

### Funding for Training

Most training is available at no cost to volunteer fire fighters. Funds are appropriated from the General Assembly and are used to provide training by the DPS to volunteer fire departments upon request.

In addition to the General Fund appropriations for fire fighter training, funding is provided from two other sources. The Paul Ryan Memorial Fire Fighter Safety Training Fund, established in Iowa Code section [100B.12](#), receives limited funding from a fee associated with special fire fighter license plates. The Volunteer Fire Fighter Preparedness Fund, established in Iowa Code section [100B.13](#), receives limited funding from the State income tax checkoff for fire fighters, as well as gifts, bequests, and donations.

Basic training is available from either the Fire Service Training Bureau or from partner community colleges. Volunteer fire fighters do not receive community college credit hours for volunteer service. Several of the community colleges in Iowa offer fire service degree programs, but these are degree programs requiring the payment of tuition and fees. However, as with any other college degree program, State, federal, and other financial assistance may be available.

### Funding for Equipment

A General Fund appropriation of \$500,000 was made each year from FY 2004 to FY 2006 for the establishment of a \$1.5 million Revolving Loan Program for the purchase of equipment by local fire departments. The funds cannot be used to build fire stations. This Program provides interest-free loans

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### More Information

Department of Public Safety — State Fire Marshal Division: [dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal](https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal)  
LSA Staff Contact: Justus Thompson (515.725.2249) [justus.thompson@legis.iowa.gov](mailto:justus.thompson@legis.iowa.gov)

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with an origination fee of 1.0%. The fee is withheld by the Fire Service Training Bureau from the original loan payout and used to offset administration costs. A repayment schedule is established at the time the loan is awarded, with a minimum of two payments per year for the duration of the loan. Generally, loans of \$50,000 or less are repaid over a 5-year period, and loans greater than \$50,000 are repaid over a 10-year period. The maximum loan amount is \$150,000, and there is no penalty for early repayment.

### **Line of Duty Death Benefit**

If the death of a volunteer emergency services provider occurs as the result of an injury incurred in the line of duty, a death benefit of \$100,000 is paid in a lump sum to the volunteer provider's beneficiary. The death benefit is paid from a standing appropriation to the Department of Administrative Services from the unobligated General Fund balance.

### **Related Statutes and Administrative Rules**

Iowa Code chapters [80](#) and [100B](#)

Iowa Code section [55.2](#)

Iowa Administrative Code [661](#)

### **Budget Unit Number**

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