



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

The last year has been one that each and every member of MCFRS could never imagine facing, and one that I am extremely proud of the amazing effort and performance of the men and women of MCFRS. Much of the time since early spring 2020 has been devoted to COVID and the MCFRS's reaction, response, adjustment, and refinement of operations. Normal - the time before the pandemic - has changed. Then the new normal changed again, and it will change a few more times in the coming months. The flexibility of the members of MCFRS allowed us to adjust to the ever-evolving pandemic environment. This flexibility is a direct result of the diverse skills, creativity, and adaptability of the members of MCFRS.



This report highlights the great work, effort, changes, and innovations each one of you took on as we navigated through the pandemic and I ask you to keep being safe, clean, supportive of each other, and ready to answer the residents' emergency and non-emergency needs.

The opening remarks for this annual plan trigger a significant change for MCFRS. We are moving away from an annual strategic plan to an annual report. This change comes from many points including the change from county fiscal year (July to June) timing to standard calendar year (January to December) timing. This allows variability of operating budget and beginning of fiscal year changes to not impact the information sharing, communication and outreach to the members of the department and the residents of the community.

The department master plan, adopted in June 2016 by the County Council, is due for revision in the summer of 2022. Work has begun on the next master plan, as the plan will set the road for the department for the next six years, 2022-2028.

As the pandemic brought change to the department, the last 12 months have brought many changes to the county and the country. These include social, political, and economic changes and conflict, as well as global climate change. Change is inevitable and MCFRS will adjust to the changes. To adjust, we must remain focused on customer service – the customers are the residents of and visitors to Montgomery County – to those that need FRS service. Part of that focus is to:

- Treat all you interact with, work with, or come in contact with – with **RESPECT**.
- Ensure your conversations and actions are **RELEVANT** to fire rescue duties while on-duty.
- Be **PROFESSIONAL** in your actions.

With this message in mind, I ask each member of MCFRS to keep their head high, to support each other, and continue to provide the quality service that our department is known for.

Scott Gold

Fire Chief



WELCOME

The Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service (MCFRS) is pleased to welcome you to our inaugural Annual Report, which is the result of some improvements that have occurred within the planning and administrative processes of the department. MCFRS is required under County Code Section 21-12 to maintain, review, and amend as necessary a [Master Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services Master Plan](#). Over the last decade, the department has also created a yearly [Strategic Plan](#), which enumerated the department's annual initiatives that would support the master plan. After an informal process review of the department's planning, accreditation, and budget processes, it was resolved that the annual strategic plan report was superfluous and would be discontinued. The master plan, which is by definition a strategic plan, will stand alone as the department's overarching framework and guideline for the County Executive, Council, and Fire Chief in making decisions regarding the delivery of fire and rescue services. The MCFRS will now produce an annual (fiscal year) work plan to coincide with the budget process, and an annual report on progress made implementing priorities and initiatives in support of the master plan.

As this is the department's first annual report, we ask that you take some time to read it, then complete a [short survey](#) to provide feedback on the content and format. Thank you.



ABOUT MCFRS

The MCFRS is a combination career and volunteer all-hazards department providing a full complement of emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, hazardous materials response, swift water rescue, fire investigation, and fire and life safety resources and education. The MCFRS is comprised of 1,155 career personnel; 744 active local fire and rescue department (LFRD) volunteers and 411 LFRD recruits/candidates; a professional support staff of 82 and 1,238 LFRD administrative/support personnel¹. The department operates from 47 work sites, 37 of which are fire and rescue stations (includes two rescue squads), strategically positioned to meet the emergency service needs of the residents, businesses, and visitors in Montgomery County.

Mission

The mission of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to protect lives, property, and the environment with comprehensive risk reduction programs and safe and effective emergency response provided by highly skilled career and volunteer service providers representing the County's diverse population.

Vision

The vision of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service is to enhance public safety and support quality of life through direct immersion in our communities, effectively blending outreach and education, and by leveraging our career and volunteer workforce to deliver exceptional services and improve our resiliency to meet increased challenges.

Values

MCFRS providers are committed to the following principles:

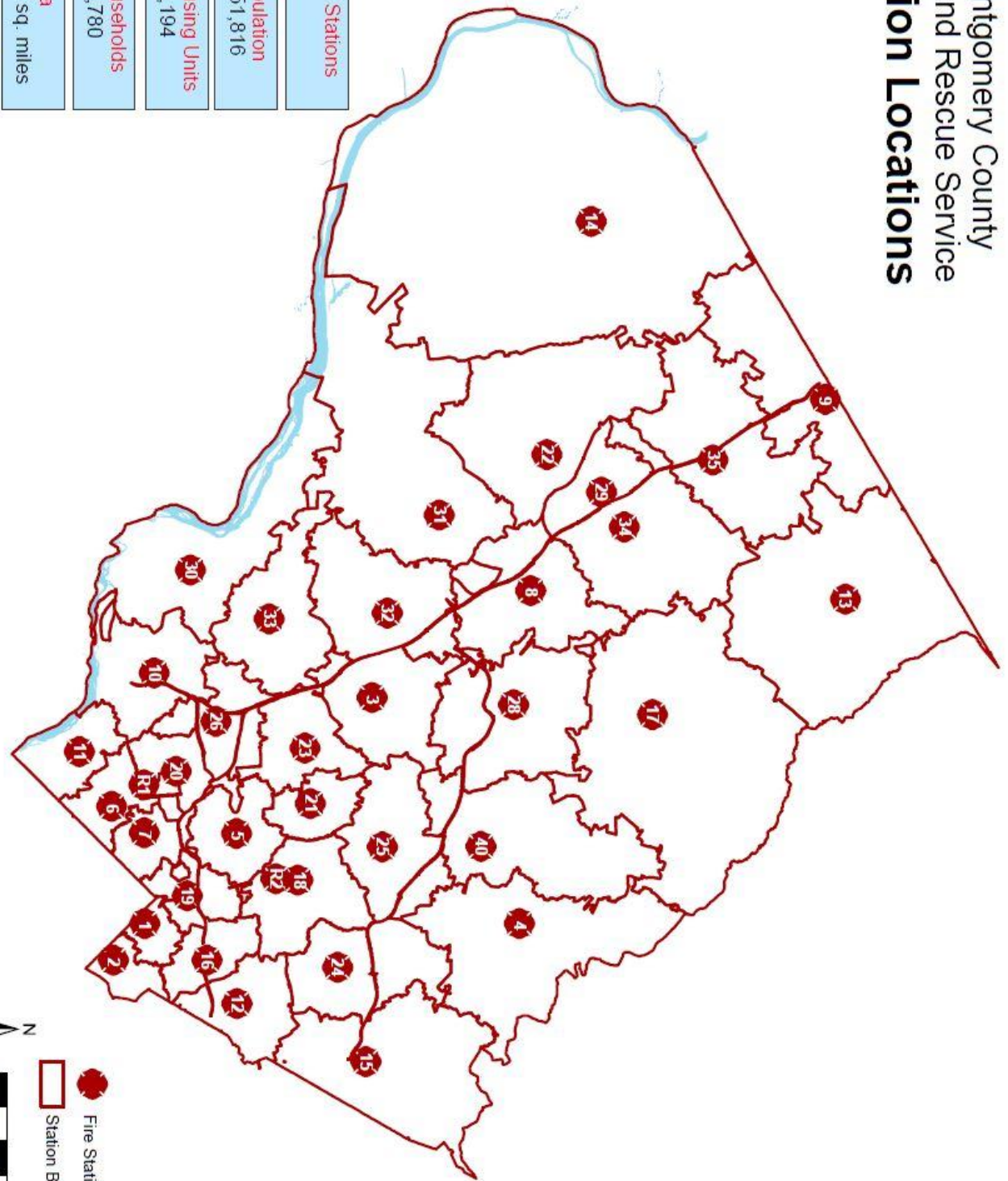
- Deliver services to our customers with impartiality and excellence
- Promote the highest standards of safety and welfare
- Serve with integrity and mutual respect
- Recognize the importance of diversity of our workforce and communities
- Promote the efficient and effective utilization of our resources, and ensure that all organizations and personnel comprising the MCFRS share the responsibility for continuously improving their capabilities, effectiveness, and efficiency
- Be responsible for the honor of our profession and public service
- Promote equity and harmony among career and volunteer personnel
- Maintain and promote open honest communication, creativity, and competence
- Be accountable and ethical
- Continuously improve public confidence and trust






¹ IECS numbers pulled August 2, 2021.





Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service Station Locations



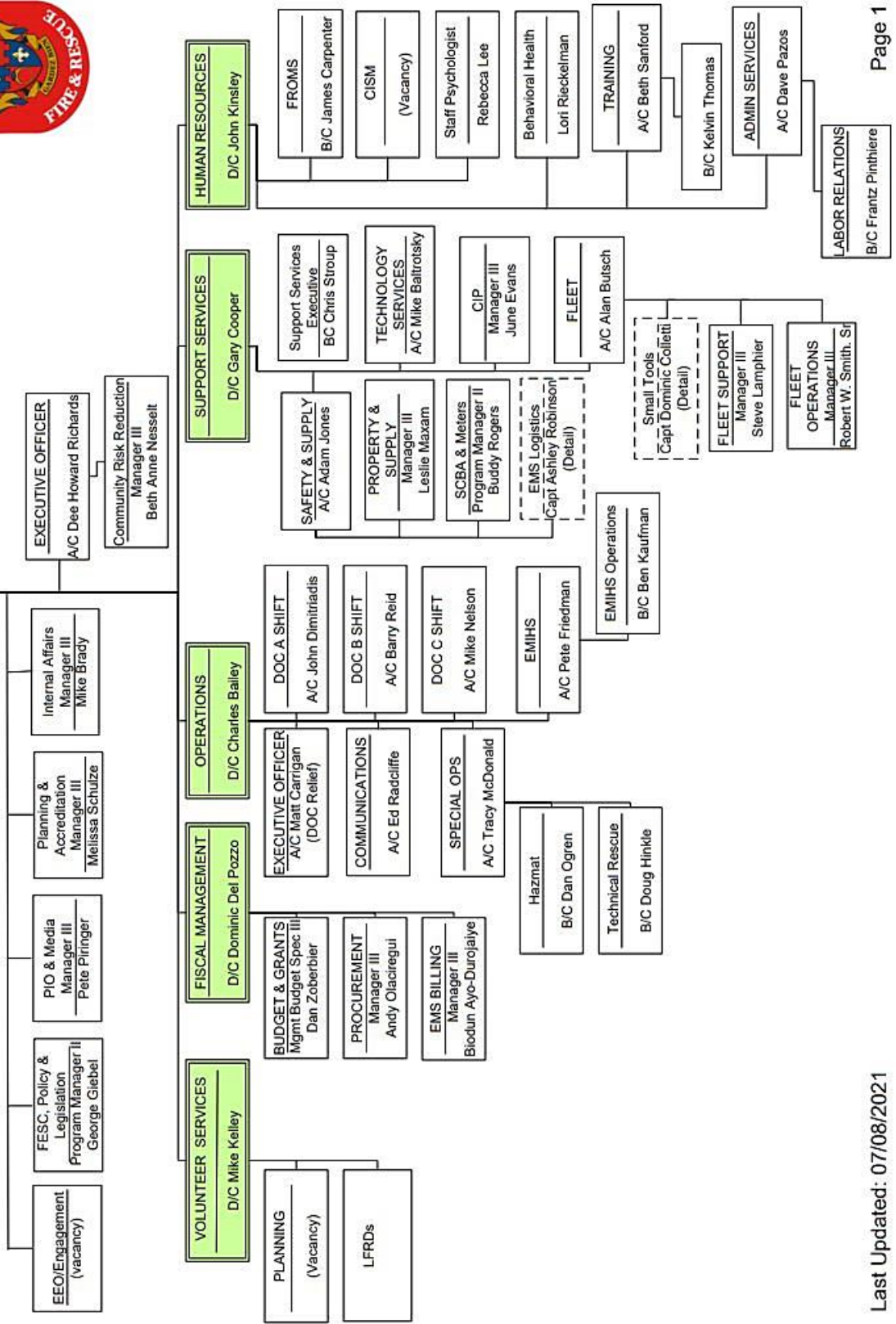
	Fire Stations 37
	Population 1,051,816
	Housing Units 393,194
	Households 370,780
	Area 506 sq. miles

Data as of July 1, 2020

Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service



**Fire Chief
Scott E. Goldstein**



Readers may click the chart for a more detailed version.



MCFRS Goals & Objectives

MCFRS members continued to work towards the department's long-established goals in support of its mission in 2020:

- To maintain operational readiness for an all-hazards mission and response capability, including emergency medical services, fire suppression, technical rescue, water/ice rescue, aviation fire-rescue, hazardous materials, and explosive device emergency services through effective deployment and leverage of career and volunteer resources (i.e., staffing and equipment) in a fiscally responsible manner.
- To minimize the number of deaths and number/severity of injuries to our customers through a comprehensive, all-hazards, risk reduction strategy implemented through our comprehensive community outreach program.
- To ensure that MCFRS embraces diversity and continuously recruits the career and volunteer personnel required to effectively deliver our services and programs, and undertakes the steps needed to address the current and projected training needs for career and volunteer leadership and workforce development (e.g., PSTA classes, online training, in-service training, station drills, classes provided by the Maryland Fire-Rescue Institute, etc.) and retain these individuals for long-term service to the community.
- To provide for and enhance the wellness, safety, training, and professional development of our personnel, including implementation of risk reduction strategies to improve occupational safety and to improve the health and wellness of MCFRS personnel.
- To seek, create and maintain strong partnerships with municipal, regional, State and federal agencies, the citizenry, and private and nonprofit organizations and institutions within Montgomery County so that we may enhance our capabilities and responsiveness to their needs/concerns and leverage their collective capabilities to assist us in our life safety, community risk reduction, injury prevention and property protection efforts to keep the community safe.
- To maintain and grow our infrastructure, including facilities, apparatus, equipment, communications systems, and information technology systems to support our mission.
- To establish an organizational commitment to evaluate, develop, and implement new technologies and innovations on a continuous basis that will enhance the effective delivery of services and performance of business processes.



- To ensure the transparency of our business operations and that open lines of communication are maintained with our customers.
- To set a desirable and attainable course for the future through strategic planning and with the establishment and periodic reassessment and refinement of our mission, vision, strategic direction, and objectives.
- To evaluate our progress and strive for continual improvement through accreditation, program appraisals, performance measurement, community feedback and technological enhancements that allow for comprehensive analysis of all aspects of MCFRS operations and administration.

To meet these goals, the MCFRS consistently strives to meet six objectives:

- Achieve and maintain the highest degree of readiness
- Optimize assets to ensure mission success
- Minimize preventable deaths and injuries and their negative impact
- Provide for the wellbeing of the workforce
- Build and maintain relationships with internal and external partners
- Implement change to enhance performance

The MCFRS COVID-19 response fulfilled each of these objectives, and yet members of the department worked tirelessly on the “routine” tasks and demands that any fire and rescue/EMS organization serving a County of more than one million people has, as you’ll see on the following pages.



MCFRS YEAR IN REVIEW

Response to COVID-19

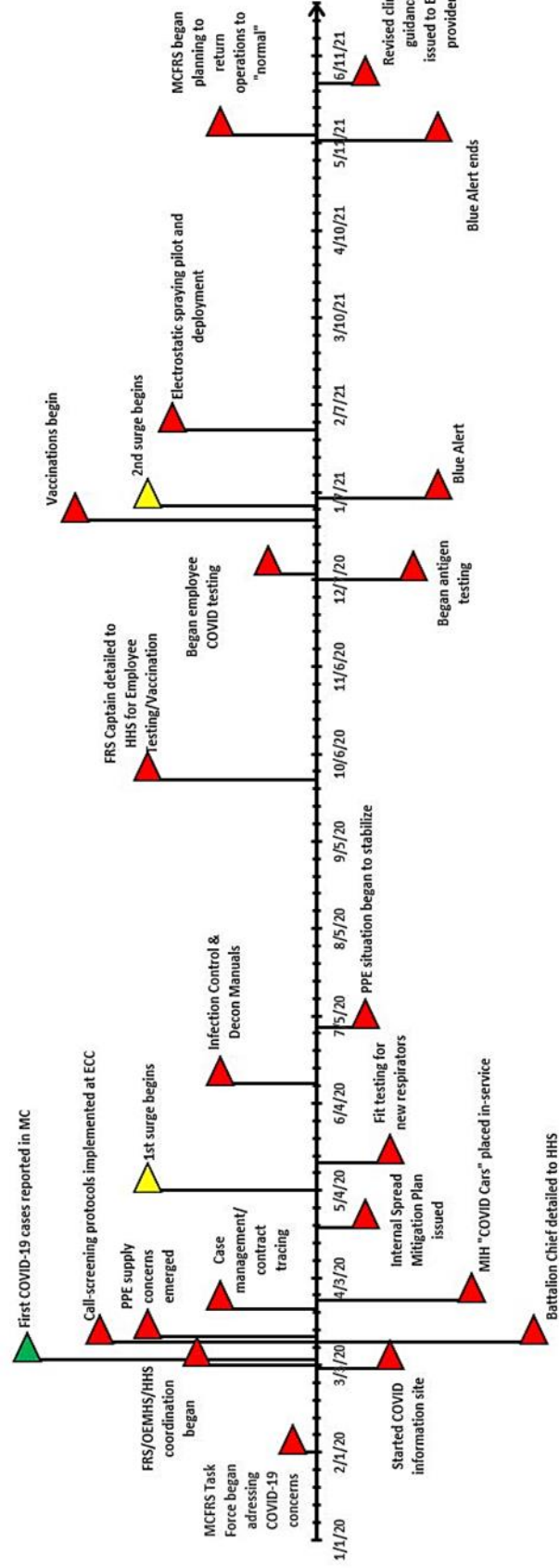
2020 was an unprecedented year in the history of MCFRS, filled with a myriad of challenges handled by our members with professionalism, tenacity, and a focus on public safety for Montgomery County. Following early reports of a novel virus emerging in China, the MCFRS assembled a task force in February to begin planning for the challenges anticipated with a viral outbreak. On March 5, 2020, Governor Larry Hogan announced the first three COVID-19 cases in Maryland, all in Montgomery County. A few days later, another Montgomery County case was reported and by March 13, the state had closed schools for two weeks and many County employees found themselves working from home. Most MCFRS employees were unable to work from home, as our firefighters and emergency medical providers are expected to respond expeditiously to emergency calls for service. Many of our professional employees also worked onsite, as they serve in support roles that keep our frontline responders functioning, ensuring that apparatus is properly maintained and serviced, uniforms and supplies are readily stocked and available, and facilities are maintained and safe for personnel.

This year required a heroic amount of sacrifice by all MCFRS members and their families as we worked to evolve the way we deliver service. As the outbreak spread, MCFRS incorporated new response protocols and engaged in quarantine and social distancing practices. We suspended community engagement and education programs, and all in-person contact activities aside from emergency responses. We stayed busy adapting to a changing world, but our members remained vigilant and responded in a manner that can make our community proud. MCFRS members worked tirelessly to maintain the high level of service Montgomery County is accustomed to, often putting themselves at great risk daily. In addition to providing for the health, welfare, and safety of our own department members, MCFRS employees also provided guidance, resources, and support to other County departments throughout the pandemic response, providing personnel to support the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) incident management team (IMT)/operations, and embedded a battalion chief within the public health command center. MCFRS also took the lead in Montgomery County's employee testing program, mass vaccination program, and recovery operations. The MCFRS vaccination team, established at the end of December 2020, delivered more than 100,000 vaccinations. Separately, the Division of Volunteer Services supported the Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) and HHS with distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE), county food drives, mobile vaccination clinics, and provided hundreds of mobility assistance golf cart transports to the public at the Germantown mass vaccination site. More than 120 volunteers with our Montgomery County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) logged nearly 1300 hours between two vaccination clinic locations.





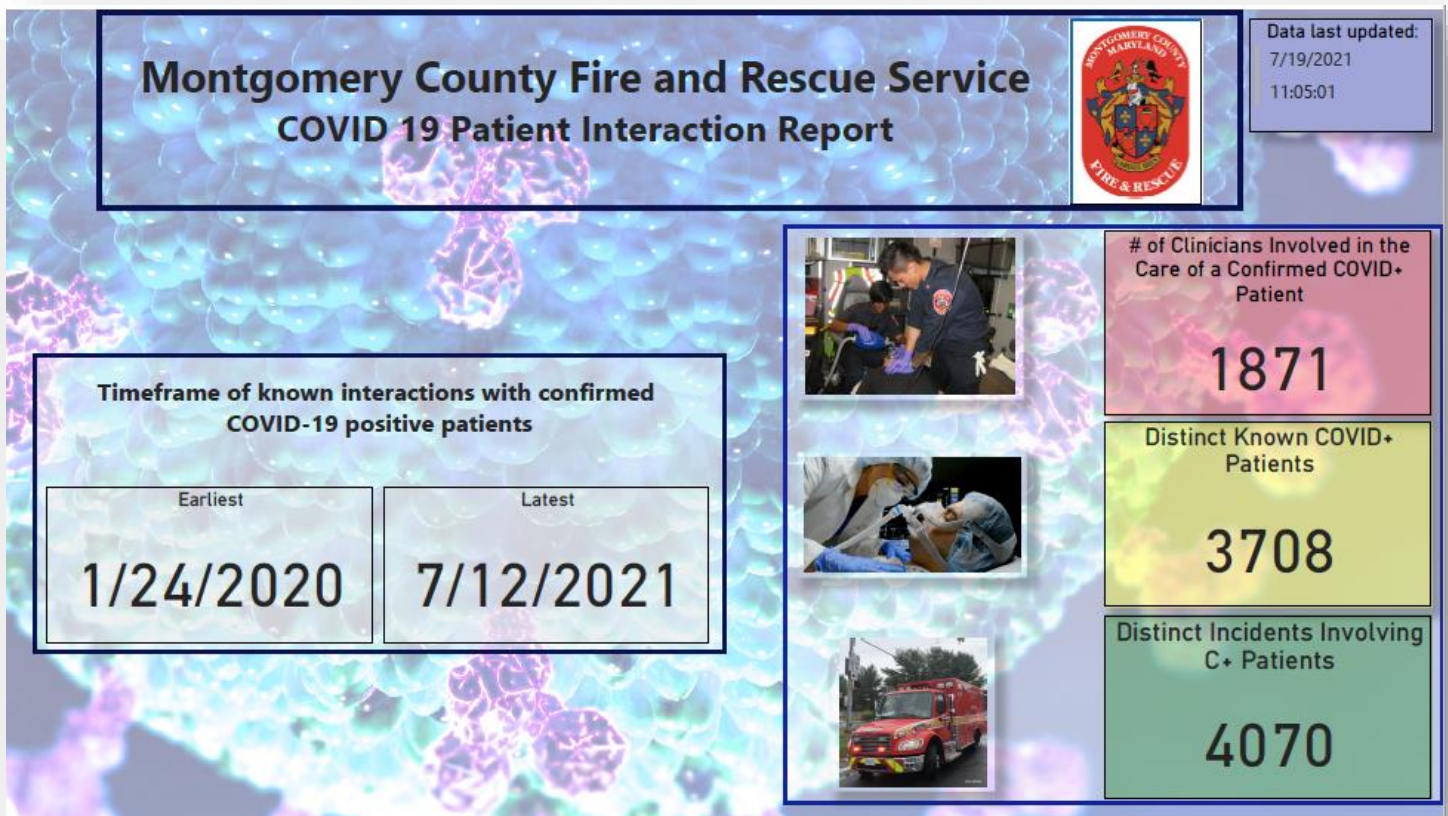
MCFRS COVID-19 Timeline



Note: Surge dates +/- 7 days



Montgomery County was a COVID-19 hotspot in the state of Maryland, and the MCFRS was faced with surges at local hospitals and skilled nursing facilities. Over the course of the last 18 months, MCFRS has been involved in more than 4,000 distinct incidents involving COVID-positive patients.



MCFRS worked hard to prepare for the pandemic surge and ensure the safety of personnel, as outlined below:

- Many past preparations and purchases of PPE and EMS supplies were critical to MCFRS's operational capabilities for the first weeks and months.
- MCFRS outlined specifications, procured, and deployed COVID personal protective equipment. PPE protocols were implemented, and the infectious disease and decontamination protocols were revised. Clinical response guidelines were developed and distributed to the workforce to balance patient care considerations with clinician protection. Due to supply chain challenges, the entire workforce was fit-tested for new N95 respirators.
- Staff in the Division of Support Services helped develop and implement COVID-19 safety recommendations for all FRS facilities and worksites.
- The Administrative Services Section managed a large-scale transition to telework.



- The Emergency Communications Center (ECC) implemented a COVID-19 patient screening process for MCFRS and MCPD.
- MCFRS developed contact tracing and antigen testing programs.
- MCFRS developed, deployed, and maintained a COVID case tracking system that handled nearly 2500 cases. MCFRS executives worked closely with Labor Relations to ensure our actions were consistent with existing collective bargaining agreements.

Operationally, there were several changes that occurred within the scope of emergency medical services:

- Using public and internal data streams, the MCFRS Emergency Medical and Integrated Healthcare Services (EMIHS) prepared a daily report for senior leadership, and HHS and was able to predict and plan for its surge and share valuable data with public health and hospital partners. Operational updates and recommendations were provided weekly.
- Decontamination teams were positioned at the hospitals during the first wave of COVID.
- An additional EMS duty officer (EMS-700) was staffed to ensure transported patients were appropriately matched with available hospital resources.
- The [MCFRS Viral Leave-At-Home \(LAH\) program](#) was created at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, prompted by the introduction of the *Viral Syndrome Pandemic Triage Protocol* by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMSS), which was adapted by MCFRS on March 27, 2020. The LAH program allowed EMS clinicians to perform an objective assessment of a patient experiencing viral symptoms and determine if they could safely convalesce at home. This avoided unnecessary utilization of a hospital emergency room bed, prevented a potentially COVID-positive patient from being exposed to more people, and gave partner hospitals and the 911 system much needed respite amid Maryland and Montgomery County's first surge. This program is still active in Montgomery County, and at least 500 patients have been able to recover in the safety of their homes. The LAH program was recently recognized with a National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award, which recognizes innovative government programs.
- EMIHS also initiated a pilot program in cooperation with Shady Grove Medical Center (SGMC) and surrounding skilled nursing facilities (SNFs), to assess the effectiveness of a treatment in place program. This program introduced a



Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP) into the field, specifically to assess and treat low-acuity patients at SNFs near SGMC. The program goal is to reduce unnecessary hospital transfers by treating the patient at the facility and referring further follow-up to the SNF staff and clinicians.

The pandemic presented many challenges for our Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Section and programs. These programs are geared towards our high-risk residents and teach them valuable life safety and prevention tips. In March 2020, MCFRS restricted public education and outreach visits to the stations, and programs to schools and other groups were prohibited due to social distancing requirements. Through innovation and learning new technologies rapid fire, the CRR team was able to align their prevention and outreach services to virtual platforms and provided exceptional and creative programs to both the public and the department. CRR also became a critical component in the dissemination of information using social media and other sources of information about the COVID-19 pandemic. As people worked from home and attended virtual school, church, and social functions, home power systems were strained; the increased use of electrical devices and charging stations created the perfect storm for electrical fires. More people were cooking from home and cleaning with do-it-yourself cleaning products due to supply shortages, creating additional opportunities for injury to occur. There is no doubt that lives were saved and injuries prevented through the robust and creative education, prevention and mitigation programs and services provided in CY20.



We're here and we're ready.

With the spread of COVID-19, MCFRS continues to take aggressive actions to **protect the health and safety of the community and first responders**. Our Incident Management team is working around the clock to monitor the situation from a national, regional and local perspective to ensure we're response-ready. **You're counting on us and we're counting on you.** Please follow all State and local guidelines regarding COVID-19. **Together we can flatten the curve** and de-accelerate the potential domino effect of COVID-19.



Call Response

- **Increased staffing and enhanced screening** protocols for 911 calls to effectively identify COVID-19 patient
- Call takers will be **asking additional questions** to direct the most appropriate response for the emergency and that responding personnel are wearing protective PPE for suspected COVID-19 calls
- **Heightened measures are precautionary** and a key part of protecting first responders and patients while helping the community prevent the spread of COVID-19 to the greatest extent possible



Staffing Adjustments

- Increase transport capability in the field through **additional units and staffing** and converting units from ALS to BLS with the addition of chase cars
- We've **increased the number of personnel** and number of available response units to ensure continuity of operations with the ability to adapt, redirect and reallocate resources to those most need
- **Prehospital operational and medical protocols** have been modified to accommodate the projected surge of COVID-19 patients.



Hospital Coordination

- All ambulances are **cleaned and disinfected** after every transport in accordance with CDC recommendations
- Hospitals are **providing increased logistical support** to decrease call times through the use of decontamination teams at hospitals and improved hospital/EMS interface.



Operations Strategy

- Incident Management team **closely monitors national, regional and local COVID-19 trends**, incidents
- We will make adjustments to expand and **coordinate local response** to meet the operational needs and maintain the availability of critical resources through a scalable surge plan.

Sample of marketing/public information work developed in support of the department's COVID response.



Again, the members of MCFRS have done an amazing job rising to the challenges of 2020 and showing a level of resilience that allowed us to continue to provide excellent customer service in the midst of a myriad of challenges. It is impossible to capture in just one annual report the many ways our department has positively impacted others and contributed to the safety, security, and well-being of the residents and visitors of Montgomery County. It is our hope that this inaugural annual report captures some of those moments and highlights the unwavering commitment and enduring perseverance of all members of this organization.

Achieved and maintained the highest degree of readiness

- The Division of Support Services focused on apparatus, equipment, and facilities:
 - Completed two multi-year projects that placed 28 engines in service, including 24 “structural attack” engines and four brush (off-road) engines.
 - Placed eight light duty fleet vehicles into service in 2020, including two EMS duty vehicles, three Fire & Explosive Investigation (FEI) vehicles, a Duty Operations Chief (DOC) vehicle, a technical operations vehicle, and a logistics vehicle.
 - Worked with the Logistics Section to palletize stored spare cots and developed a plan for deployment to battalion headquarter stations in the event of an emergency.
 - Worked closely with the Department of General Services (DGS) and other partner agencies to open newly renovated Station 25.
 - Phase 1 of the new Fire Station 35 involved the extension of the sewer line in Clarksburg, a prerequisite for construction of the new station.
 - New apparatus bays doors were installed at Stations 5, 19, and 26.
 - Worked with multiple partners to successfully transition to a new P25 radio system. The new 22-site system replaced a 20+-year old non-P25 system that was rapidly failing. The new system will serve the MCFRS and the overall public safety needs in Montgomery County for years to come.
- The Special Operations Section completed the buildout of the Operations Room at headquarters and the FRS IMT was built out to better assist with planning, documentation, etc.
- Special Operations also worked with our partners in OEMHS and the MCPD to secure federal grant money in 2020 through the Maryland Emergency Response System for the purchase of 12 small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) drones.



These sUAS will be used on a variety of calls throughout Montgomery County to assist MCFRS with determining the scope of incidents and improving operations. Special Operations will continue to work with OEMHS and the MCPD over the course of the next year to develop a response team and protocols for the new equipment.

- The Division of Volunteer Services revamped CERT basic training to meet new 2020 FEMA standards and developed and offered three virtual CERT basic 30-hour courses for County residents. Monthly training for CERT members was conducted via Zoom, and volunteers planned and participated virtually in the national CERT conference, with more than 300 mid-Atlantic and international participants.
- CERT acquired and is outfitting a refurbished ambulance (CERT 700) for mobile support missions. CERT 700 will be used by the CERT “go-team” and can be called upon to assist with searches for missing persons and for support to MCFRS during special events, such as parades, charity races/walks, and other large-scale community events.

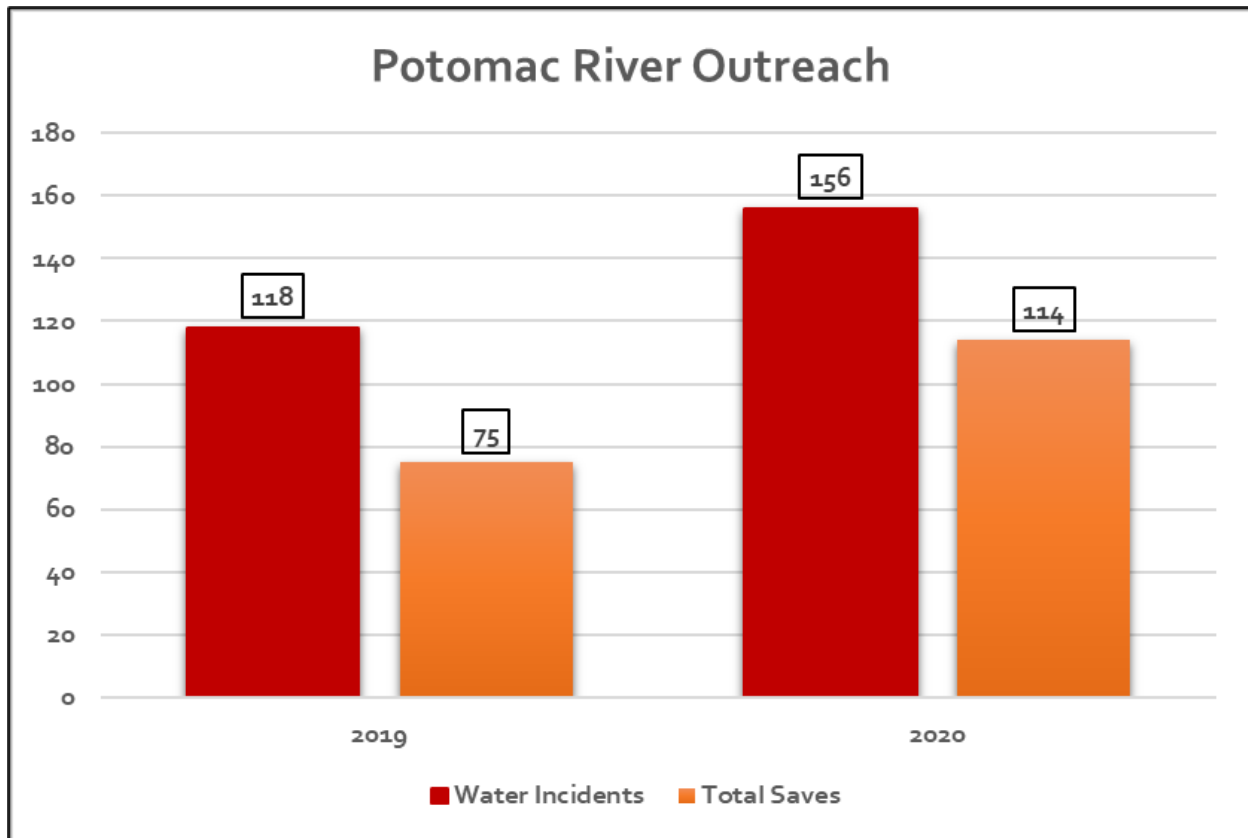
Optimized assets to ensure mission success

- There was some reorganization within the Division of Support Services in 2020 to optimize assets and create more efficiency. The Technical Operations Section merged with the Information Technology Section to create a single MCFRS Technology Services Section. And the Facilities Maintenance Section reorganized to create a more efficient business model for communications between vendors and other supporting sections.
- The Montgomery County CERT, with support from MCFRS, developed an innovative program in 2013 that offered new ways for volunteers to give back to their community. The program is called the Virtual Emergency Response Team (VERT). The VERT program integrates volunteers with technology and has four strategic areas of focus: 1) situation reports during local weather emergencies; 2) social media monitoring and research during local, national, and international disasters; 3) data call requests; and 4) training artificial intelligence systems to extract disaster data. VERT volunteers have provided over 3,400 situation reports for 30 weather-related events to regional emergency managers since 2013 and has been included in 14 international research papers, book chapters, and DHS guidance documents. VERT is currently working with George Mason University, Brigham Young University, and The University of Texas Austin on a National Science Foundation grant to develop artificial intelligence capabilities in disasters, and it will be showcased at this year’s International Association of Emergency Managers Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The VERT program was also recognized recently with a NACo Achievement Award.



Minimized preventable deaths and injuries and their negative impact

During the summer of 2020, due to increases in swift water and trail calls along the Potomac River, the Special Operations Section started a Potomac River Outreach effort to speak to people about river safety, trail safety, and to warn against the dangers of swimming in the river. Last year, visitor volume to the park more than doubled, and having resources already on the water engaging the public likely reduced the number of potential incidents that could have occurred. Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, there were 71 water incidents; in 37 cases, resources were conducting outreach and able to respond to those incidents more quickly. Due to the success of this campaign, Special Operations has continued the outreach program in 2021.



Provided for the wellbeing of the workforce

- The Fiscal Management Division applied for and was awarded two FEMA *Assistance to Firefighters* Grants, one for source capture exhaust systems in the amount of \$273,000, and the other for personal protective gear in the amount of \$358,000.
- The Division of Support Services completed the design, engineering, and contract execution to install a fall protection system in all bays of the Central Maintenance Facility, a multi-year process involving DGS Facilities and Risk Management.



- Several projects from the Level of Effort Capital Improvement project list were also completed or initiated:
 - HVAC replacement at Stations 24 and 31.
 - Resurfacing at Station 10, incorporating new federal ADA site requirements. Station 10 is the first station to be done in this manner.
 - New emergency generators were installed at Stations 4 and 40.
 - Station 23 had an update on its life safety systems.
 - Design on the addition to accommodate female facilities at Station 30 began.
- The Division of Volunteer Services filled the vacant Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) administrator position in 2020. The LOSAP administrator continues to support the local fire and rescue departments (LFRD) in tracking volunteer service and performing annual LOSAP certification. Last year, the administrator generated more than 60 new LOSAP and death benefits recipients; prepared three COVID-19 nominal fee payment reports for 703 responders; prepared the annual volunteer nominal fee report, and provided reporting to the LFRDs, chief officers, and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCFVRA).
- In addition to focusing on worksite specific COVID safety engineering measures, the Safety Section updated the respiratory protection plans, led the charge on training for cot safety, and began some comprehensive analysis of highway safety measures.
- The Division of Human Resources hired a new staff psychologist, Dr. Rebecca Lee, and re-organized the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and peer support teams.
- The department's mental health team was recognized with a NACo Achievement Award for its efforts in compiling mental health resources for public safety employees. In 2020, the MCFRS mental health team worked with our public safety partners to consolidate all the mental health services and programs available to public safety employees in Montgomery County, resulting in a comprehensive resource repository that may be conveniently viewed by an employee when experiencing a mental health crisis or during a time of need, and can facilitate engagement with a professional who can provide assistance.

Built and maintained relationships with internal and external partners

- The Facilities Maintenance Section developed a partnership with the State of Maryland for sourcing surplus equipment, resulting in a cost savings for the MCFRS. This section also entered into a partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Corrections on the bid proposals for washers and dryers, another cost savings for the department.



Implemented change to enhance performance

The MCFRS is always seeking ways to create efficiencies and make improvements to enhance performance.

- At the ECC, the implementation of universal call-taking was completed in February 2020, and RapidSOS software was implemented to improve the geo-verification of callers.
- Technology Services successfully built and tested a new mobile data platform which will eventually replace the entire MCFRS fleet of mobile data computers (MDC). This section also successfully procured a much-needed upgrade to the MCFRS Asset Management System, which has been in place for many years. The new system will allow the MCFRS to ensure greater accountability of its assets and consumables across the department.
- The Division of Support Services aligned the monthly Amazon Business order for station commanders to coincide with the monthly Benjamin Office Supply and Grainger orders. This change helped to efficiently regulate all monthly supply orders for 37 worksites. Support Services also worked with the Fiscal Management Division to improve communications and tracking of invoices.
- The Facilities Maintenance Section implemented a new station defect reporting system, as well as an in-house craftsman program for defects, again creating a cost savings for the MCFRS. And this section digitized the blueprints for all MCFRS facilities and worksites.
- The CIP Section worked with DGS and the Office of Sustainability in lighting retrofits at stations to completely replace outdated lighting fixtures with new, energy efficient lights.
- In order to assess patient satisfaction with emergency medical services, MCFRS was able to build a process using commonly available off-the-shelf software that delivered an online survey link via SMS text message to the patient or their families within 24 to 48 hours of service. The survey contains 10 Likert scale data points and invites patient comments. Automated processes allow the MCFRS to funnel qualitative feedback directly to the MCFRS personnel involved and their supervisors and allows the patients to ask for follow-up from a quality assurance officer. This process has been running since July 2020; in that time, 64% of patients have been queried with a 21% return rate overall. This initiative also earned a NACo Achievement Award.



- The Public Safety Training Academy (PSTA) restructured training course delivery to emphasize remote learning and trained the first cohort of new Lieutenant prospects completely online for significant cost savings.
- The Admin Services Section streamlined hiring and administrative processes and developed multiple methods for tracking admin services cases.
- The Fiscal Management Division transitioned to a paper-free invoice payment process.

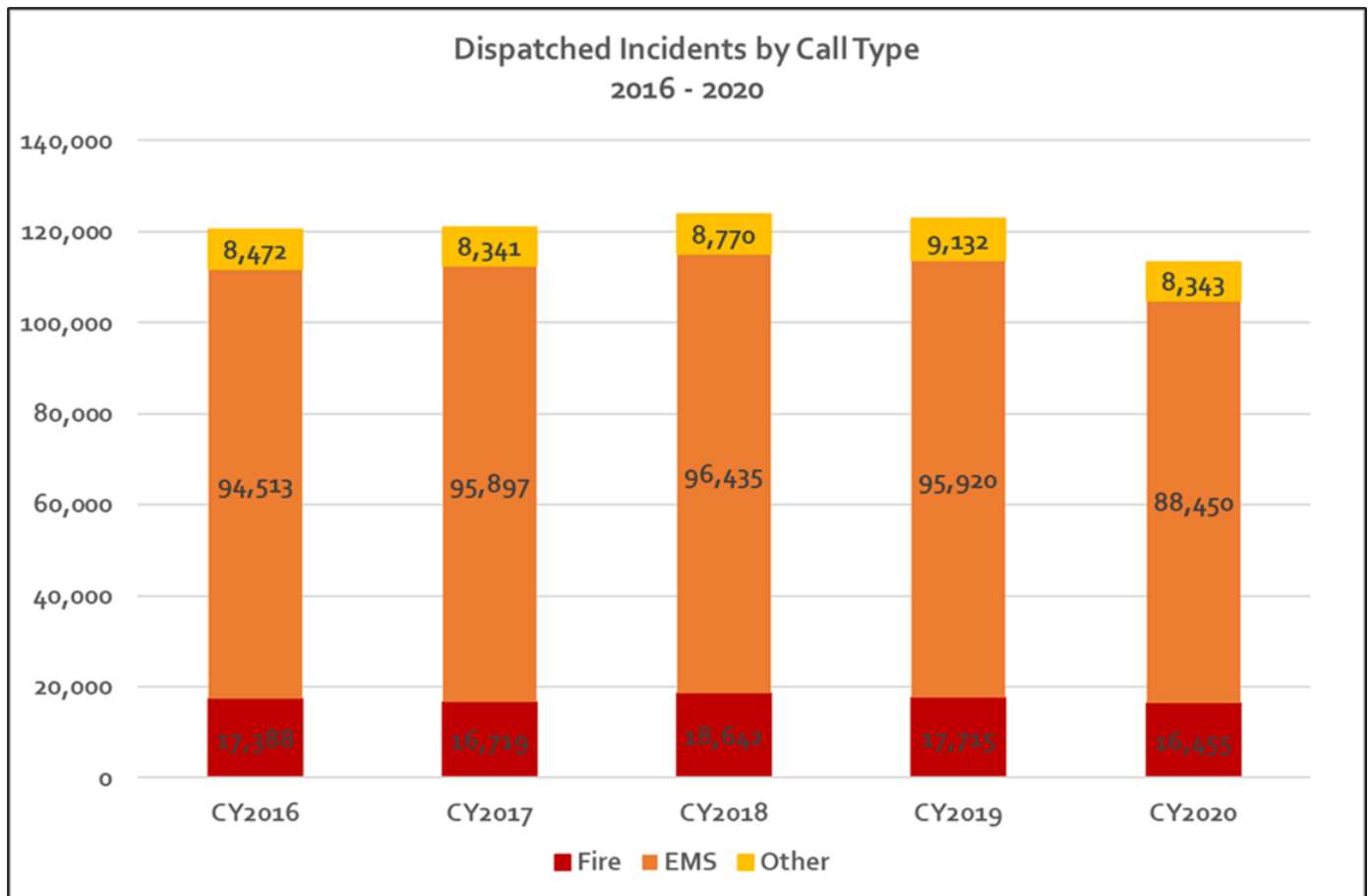
In 2020, the Fiscal Management Division:

- ✓ *Processed and approved over 600 requisitions and direct purchase orders.*
- ✓ *Processed, approved, and paid nearly 12,000 invoices.*



MCFRS STATISTICS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

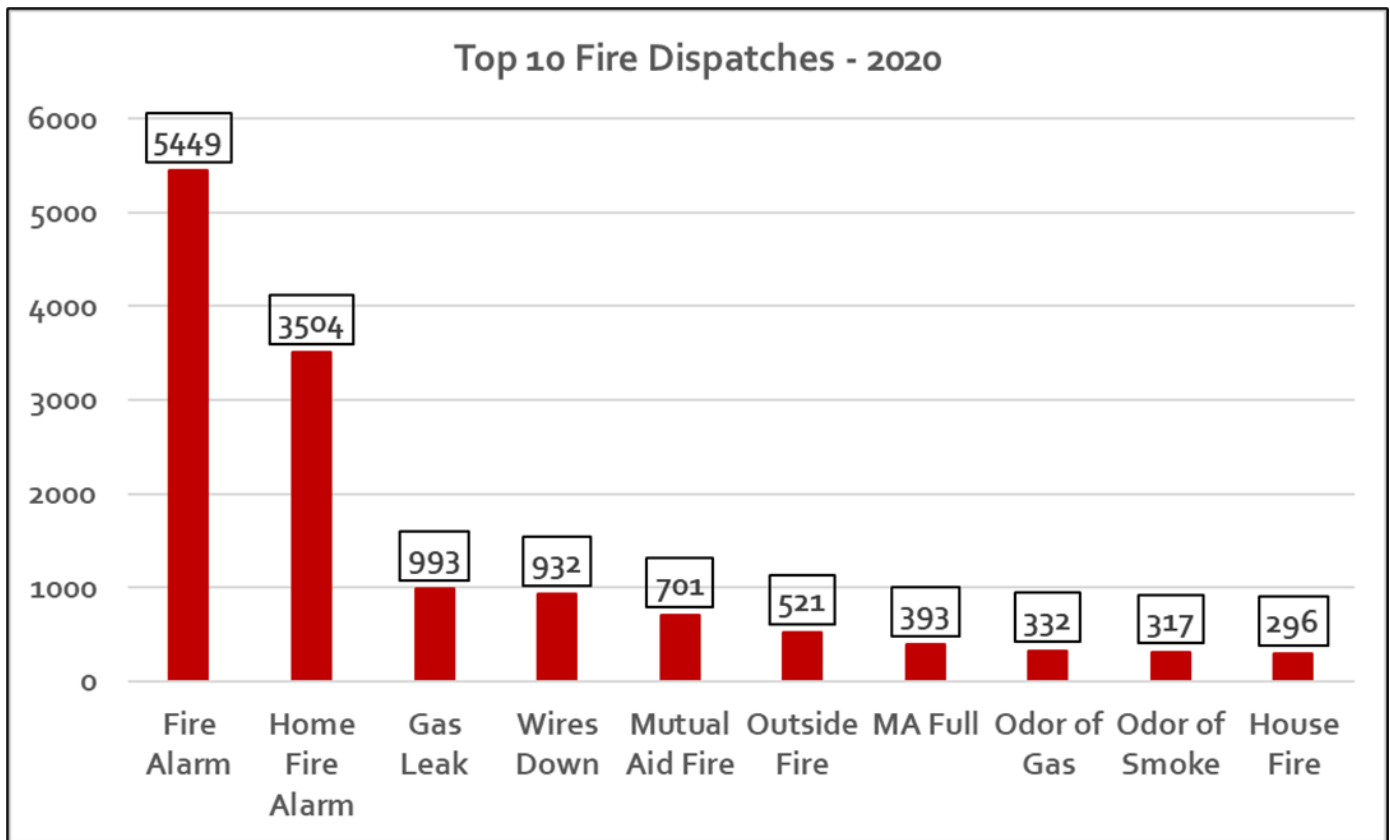
Despite COVID-19, MCFRS experienced a slight decline (-7.75%) in calls for service in 2020. This can be attributed to effective messaging within the County that helped limit unnecessary 911 calls during the pandemic response.



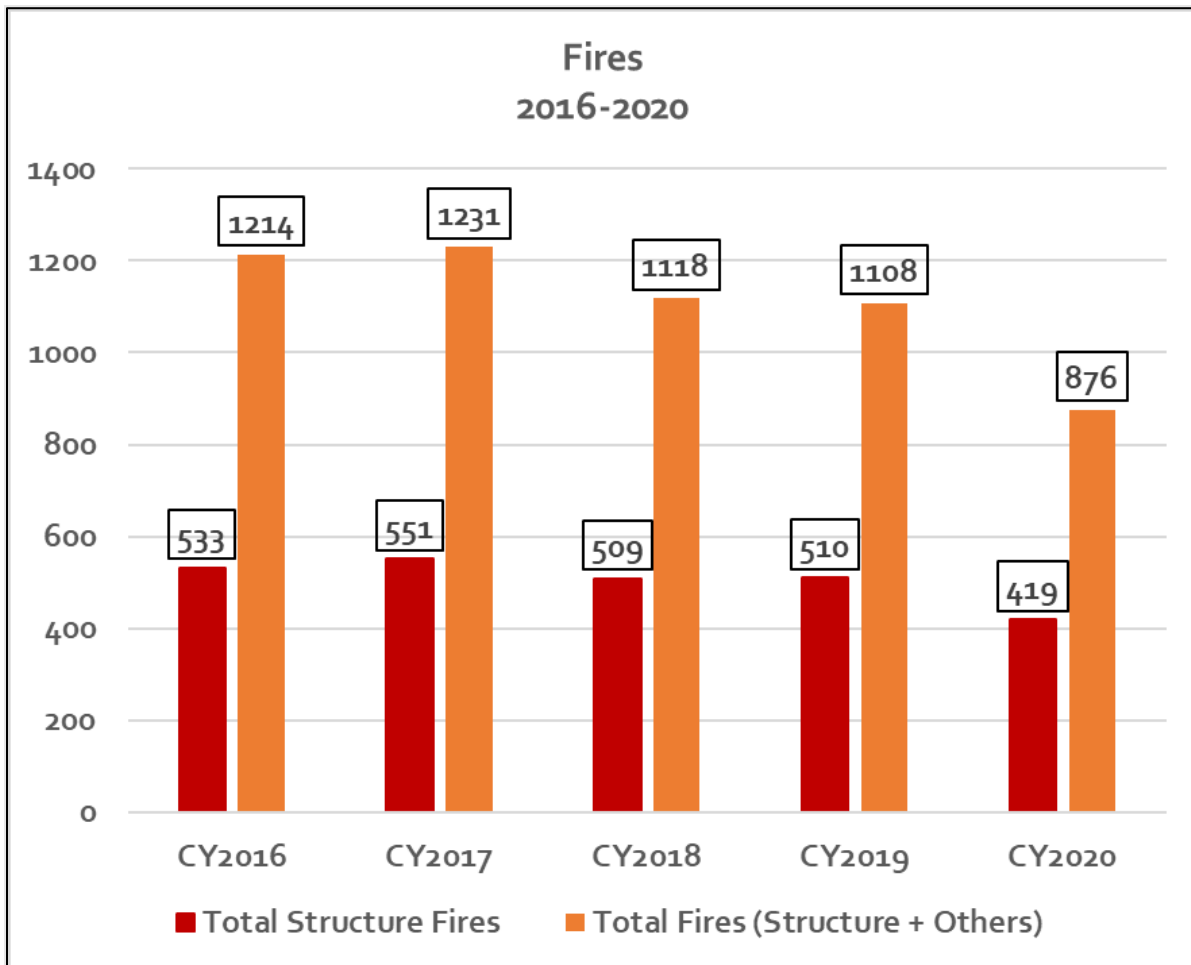
Data retrieved 7/12/2021 using Crystal Reports. Call volume includes mutual aid calls.



In 2020, there were 802 incidents dispatched as Fire Full Assignment (FFA), a 7.4% decline from the previous year. These are the most serious fire-related incidents, as the 911 call taker has learned from the caller that smoke or flame is visible within or outside a structure, making the incident more urgent and life-threatening.



MCFRS recorded 876 fires in 2020, a 21% decline from 2019. Of those, 419 were structure fires.

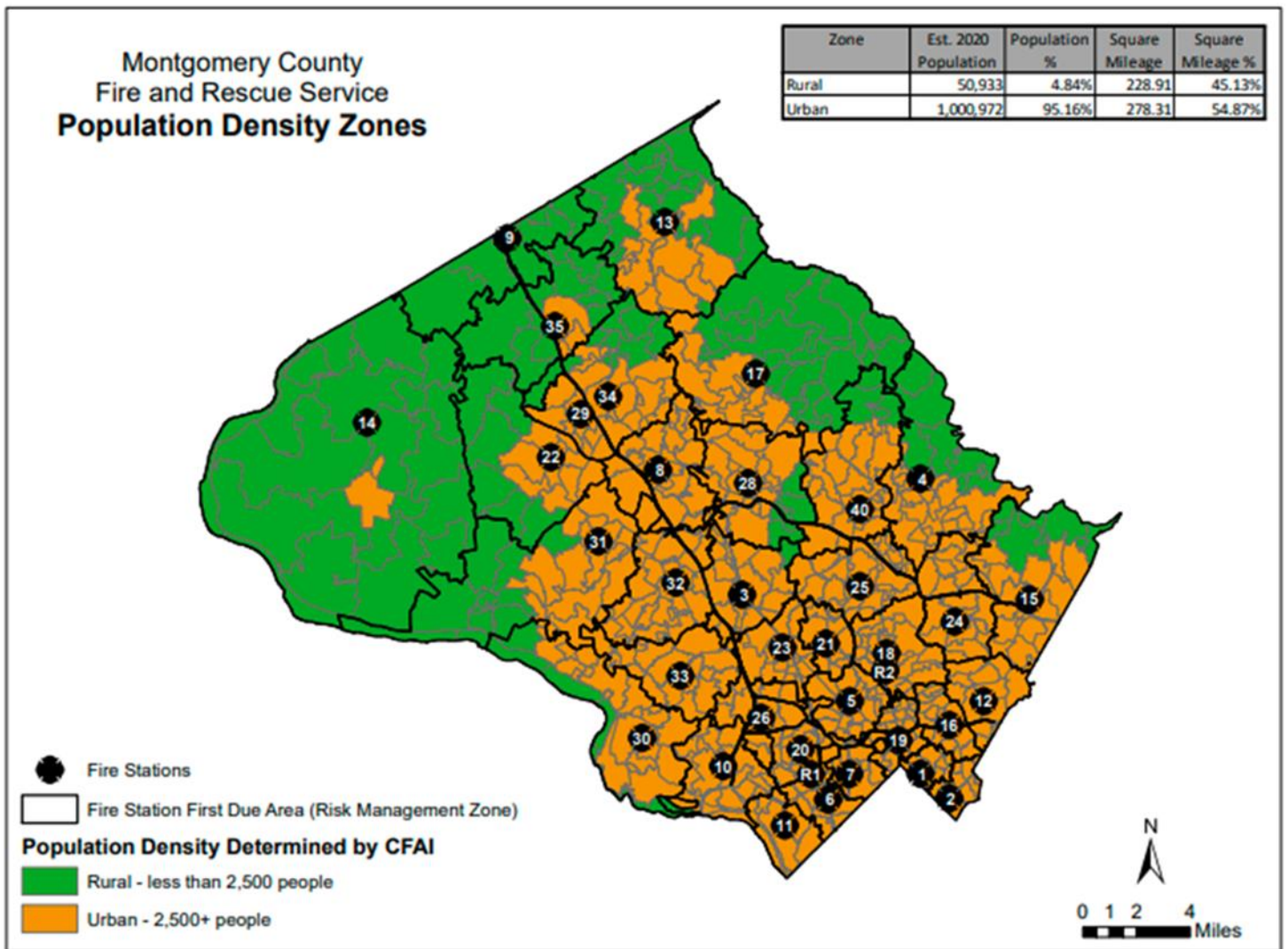


	CY2016	CY2017	CY2018	CY2019	CY2020
Total Structure Fires	533	551	509	510	419
Structure Fire Loss	\$21,118,384	\$21,886,402	\$27,715,197	\$27,955,161	\$23,149,245

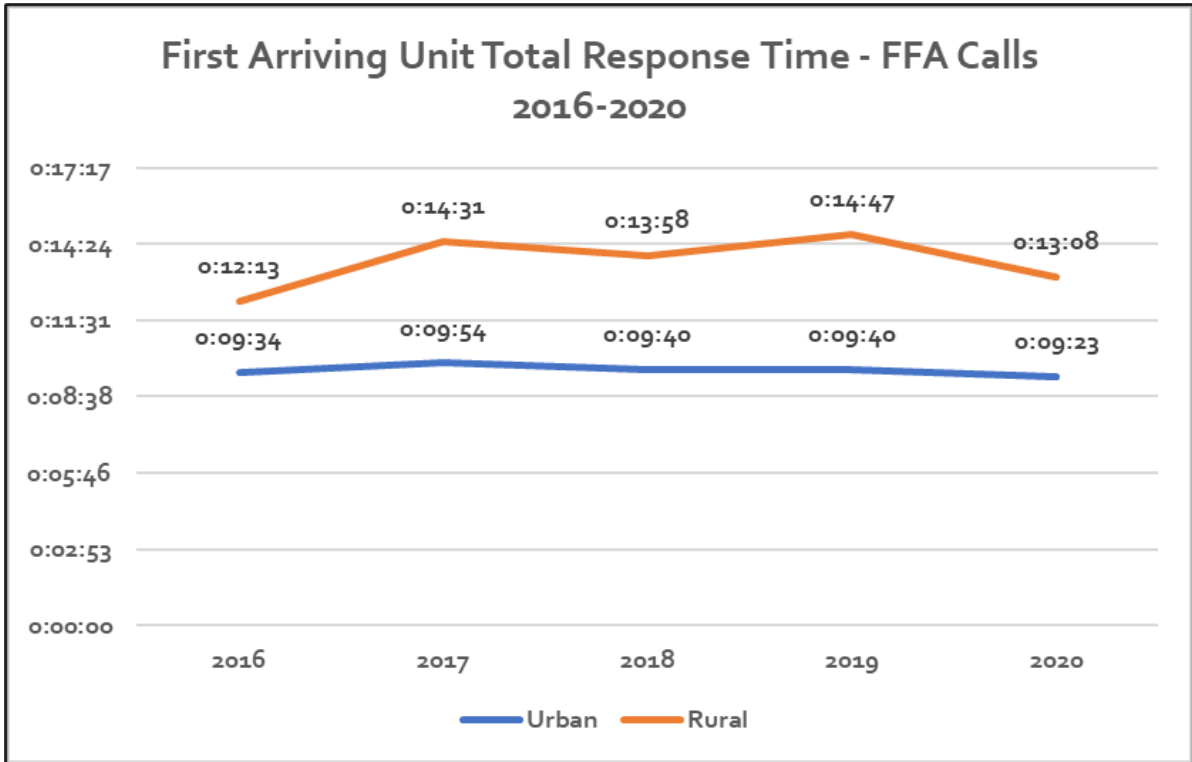
	Total Fire-Related Civilian Injuries	Total Fire-Related Civilian Deaths	Total Firefighter Deaths
2020	28	6	0



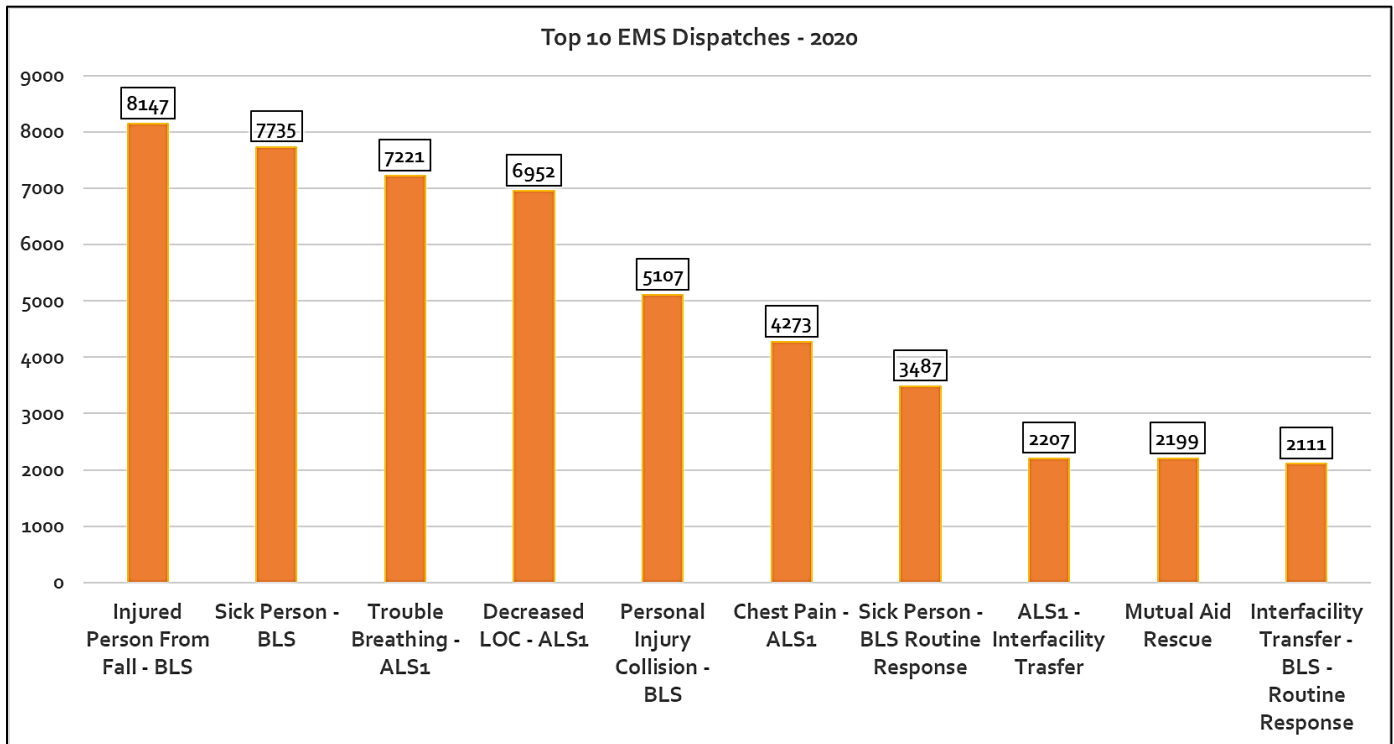
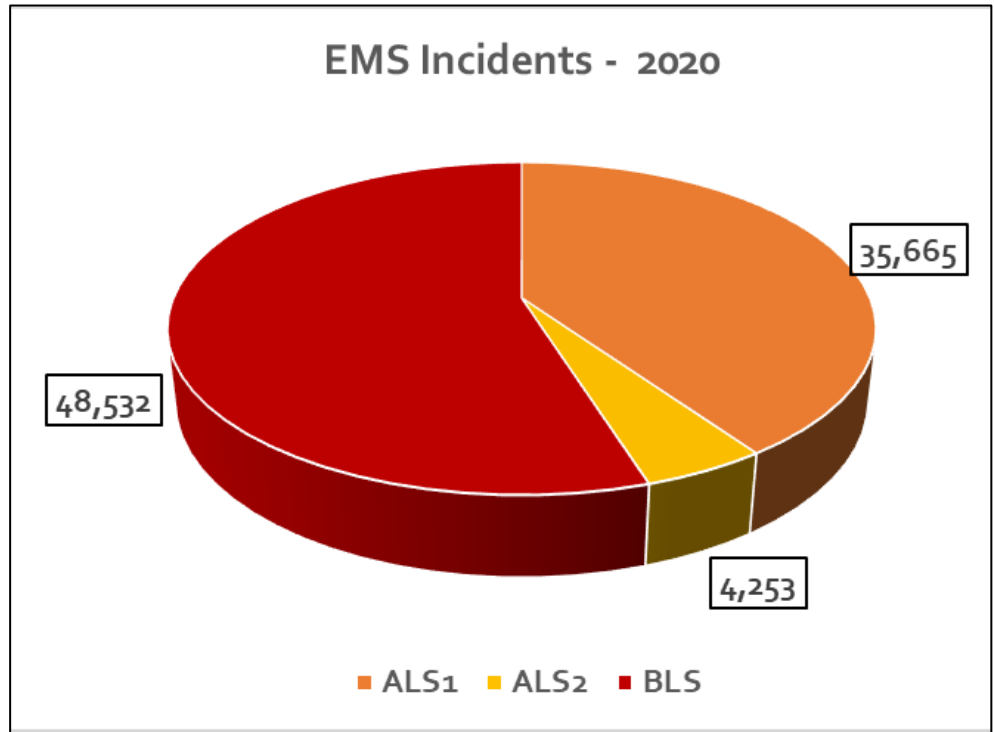
In 2019, MCFRS revised the four-tiered population density maps (urban, suburban, metropolitan, rural) to two density zones: urban (more than 2500 people per square mile) and rural (less than 2500 people per square mile). Performance measures are generally evaluated by density zone. Readers can click the map to see an online version.



Fire Full Assignment (FFA) (90th percentile)						
	2019		2020		Benchmarks	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Phone to Dispatch	0:04:06	0:04:07	0:04:02	0:04:34	0:03:00	0:03:00
Turnout	0:01:32	0:02:21	0:01:31	0:02:14	0:01:20	0:01:20
Travel	0:05:54	0:11:37	0:05:34	0:08:25	0:05:45	0:10:45
Total Response - FAU	0:09:40	0:14:47	0:09:23	0:13:08	0:09:15	0:14:15



EMS-related incidents comprised 78.1% of the call volume in 2020, while fire-related incidents accounted for 14.5% of the call volume. Other incidents, which include special operations and service calls, declined in 2020 as a percentage of total calls (7.4%). ALS incidents accounted for 45.1% of EMS calls.



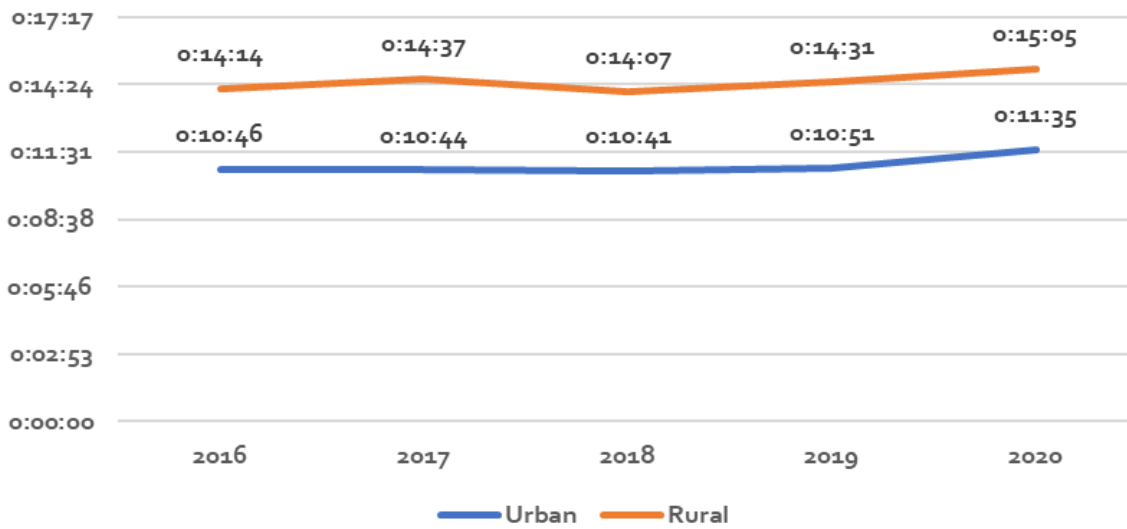
The Fiscal Management Division processed patient care reports associated with 56,536 ambulance transports and collected \$15.5 million in ambulance transport revenue.



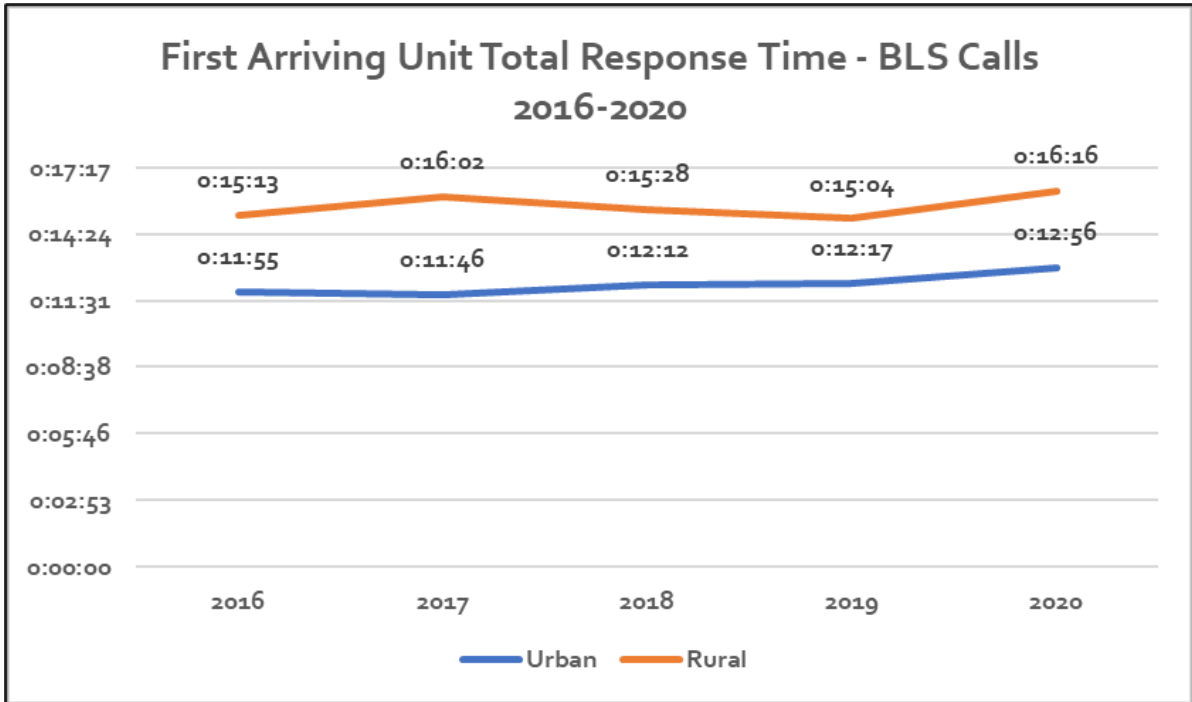
Advanced Life Support (ALS) (90th percentile)

	2019		2020		Benchmarks	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Phone to Dispatch	0:03:40	0:03:39	0:04:04	0:03:49	0:03:00	0:03:00
Turnout	0:01:36	0:01:45	0:01:39	0:01:47	0:01:20	0:01:20
Travel	0:06:37	0:10:27	0:06:38	0:10:35	0:06:00	0:10:00
Total Response - FAU	0:10:51	0:14:31	0:11:35	0:15:05	0:10:15	0:14:00

First Arriving Unit Total Response Time - ALS Calls 2016-2020



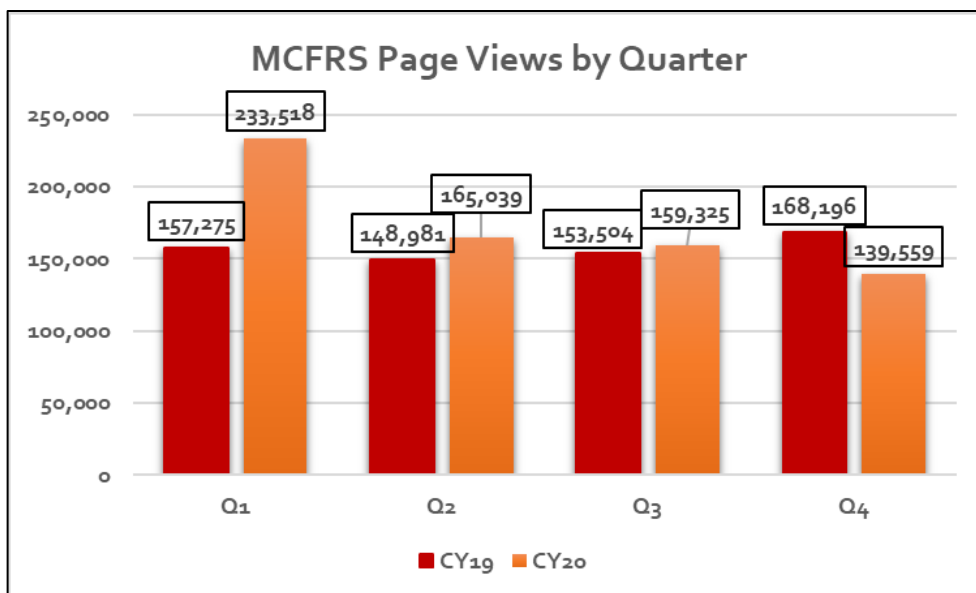
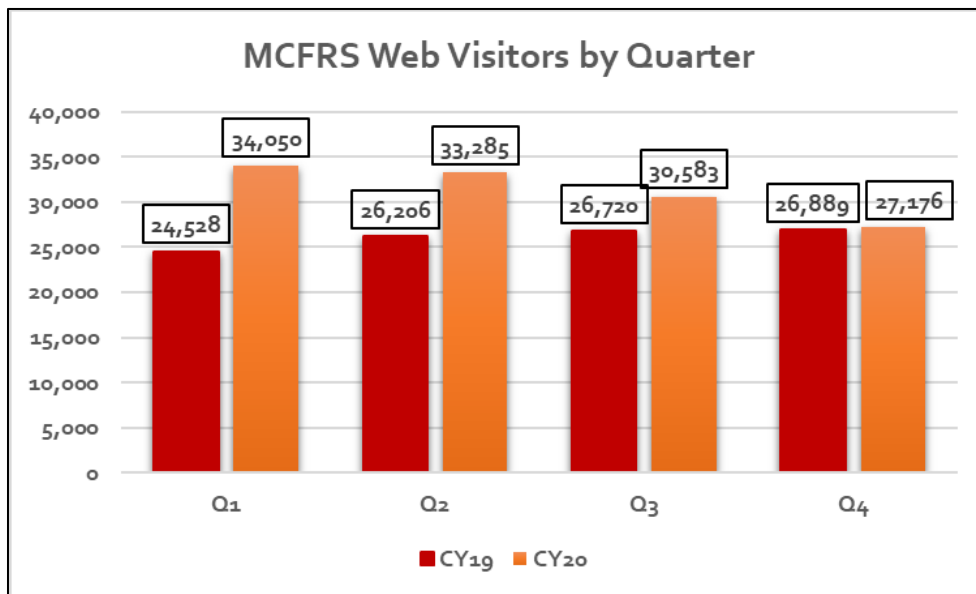
Basic Life Support (BLS) (90th percentile)						
	2019		2020		Benchmarks	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
Phone to Dispatch	0:03:59	0:04:05	0:04:22	0:04:23	0:03:00	0:03:00
Turnout	0:01:37	0:01:40	0:01:38	0:01:50	0:01:20	0:01:20
Travel	0:07:58	0:10:45	0:08:07	0:11:29	0:07:00	0:11:00
Total Response - FAU	0:12:17	0:15:04	0:12:56	0:16:16	0:12:00	0:15:00



LIFE SAFETY

The Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Section offers a wide variety of programs for the community, ranging in targeted outreach from our car seat program to our senior outreach programs. The CRR team works tirelessly behind the scenes and in the community delivering programs tailored for the audience, including programming that's also available in Spanish. CRR appointment-based home safety checks, smoke alarm checks, virtual car seat checks, and other presentations continue to make our community safer, one home and one car at a time.

As the pandemic escalated in 2020, the number of website visitors also increased, as more people sought information on prevention and life safety measures. There were nearly 20% more visitors to the MCFRS website and 11.1% more page views in 2020 than 2019.

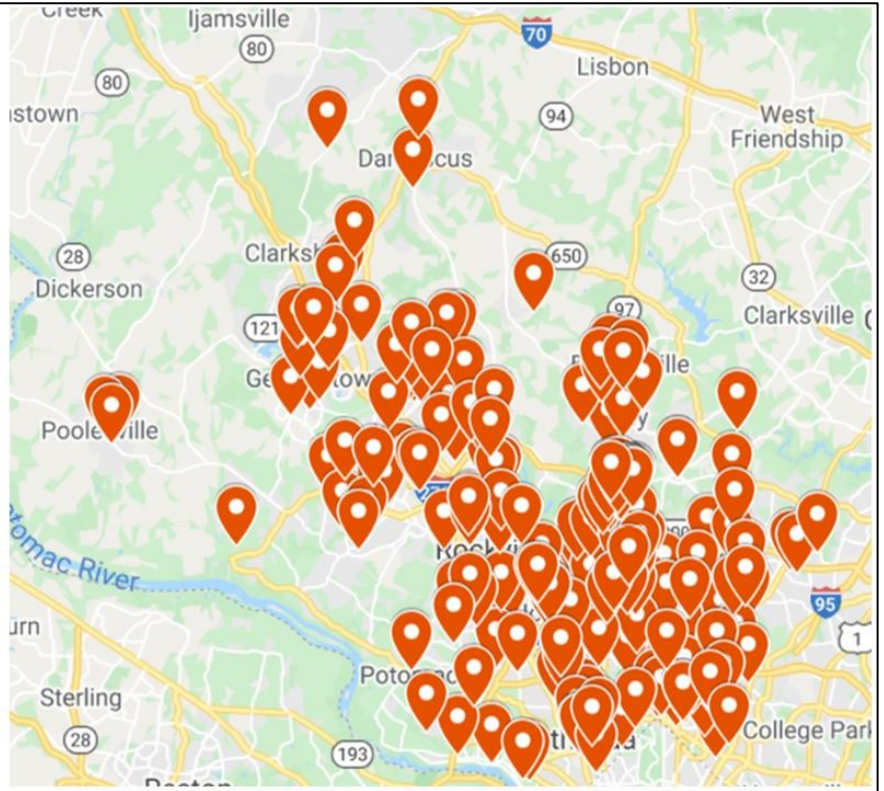


CRR experienced a surge in requests under the File of Life initiative due to policy changes within EMIHS and the hospital restrictions that were implemented for COVID.

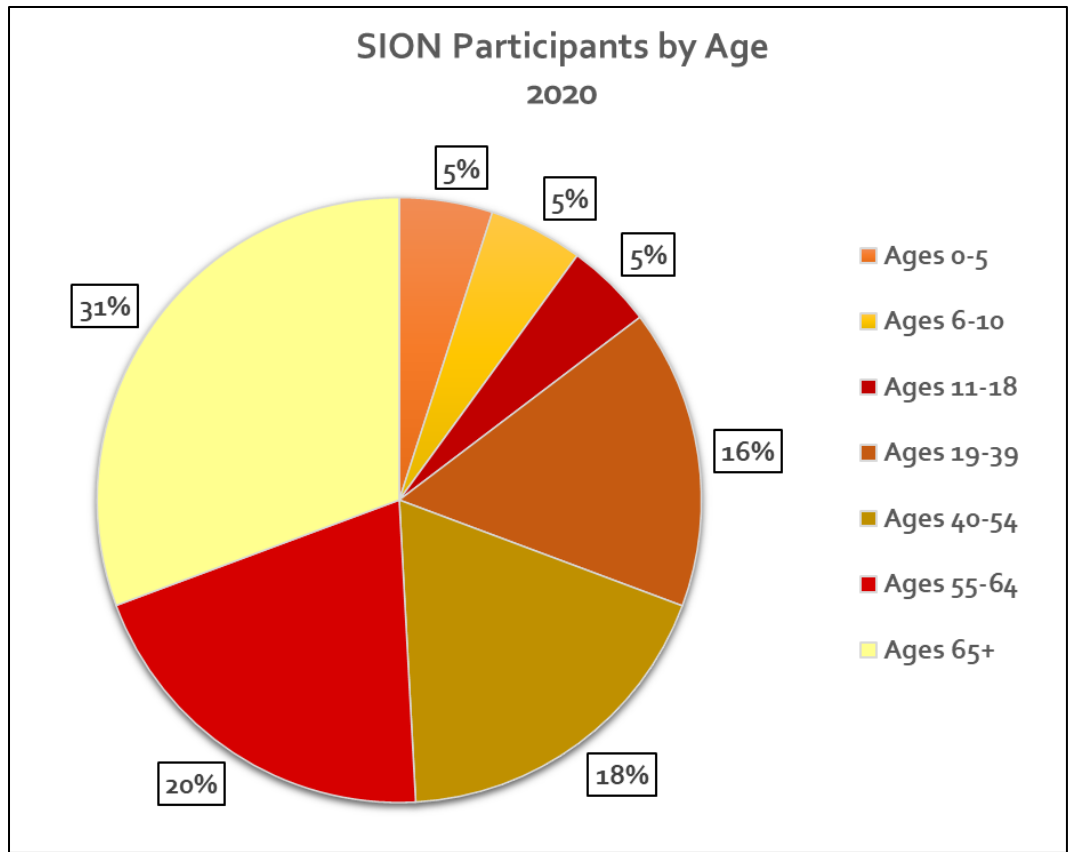
File of Life Requests

4/1/2020 – 6/3/2020

- Changes in MCFRS EMIHS policies during COVID-19 prompted a surge in File of Life requests.
- Significant media coverage included info about requesting a File of Life from MCFRS.
- This map reflects the surge, including 226 requests and 883 File of Life packets sent out during this period (average of 4 requests per day and 14 File of Life packets sent per day).



The Safety in Our Neighborhood programs continue to be the cornerstone services provided by CRR and MCFRS operations and volunteer personnel. Despite the pandemic, there were more than 3800 contacts made through these programs.





Key Performance Indicators



386

Home Safety Checks



386

Smoke Alarms Installed



81

Batteries Installed



51

Carbon Monoxide Alarms
Installed



908

Child Safety Seats Installed



2756

Outreach Presentations -
Direct Contacts



330

Recruit School

of Recruits Trained in CRR since May 2017

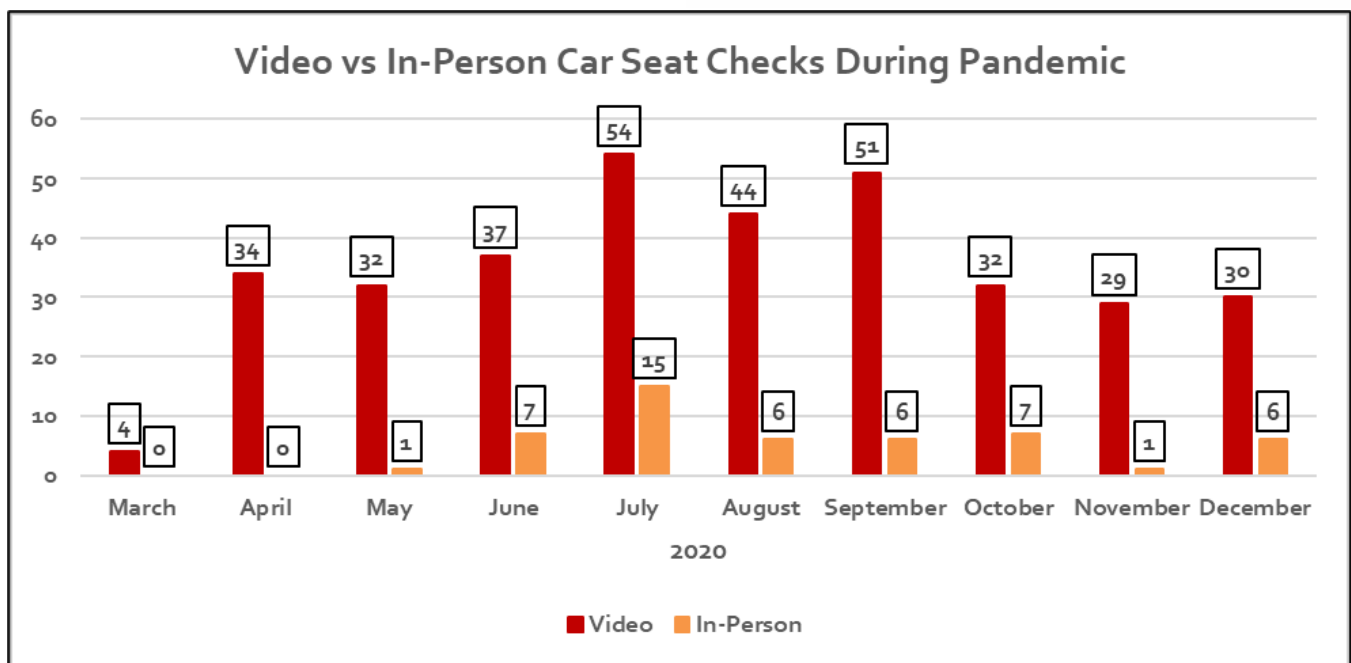


991

County 311 Requests



The dedicated professionals in CRR successfully overcame the pandemic challenges by focusing on social media platforms and other safe ways to educate the public on fire and life safety. For example, the team worked hard to modify the home safety and smoke alarm installation programs to be delivered via Zoom and other virtual platforms, which allowed the team to meet and educate *more* County residents due to the ease of the technology and the elimination of the need to travel from home to home. Similarly, the [Car Seat Safety Program](#) transitioned to virtual programming in March 2020. Overall, there were 399 hours devoted to car-seat installation in 2020, including 36 in-person events that were held in January and February of 2020, not shown in the graph below.

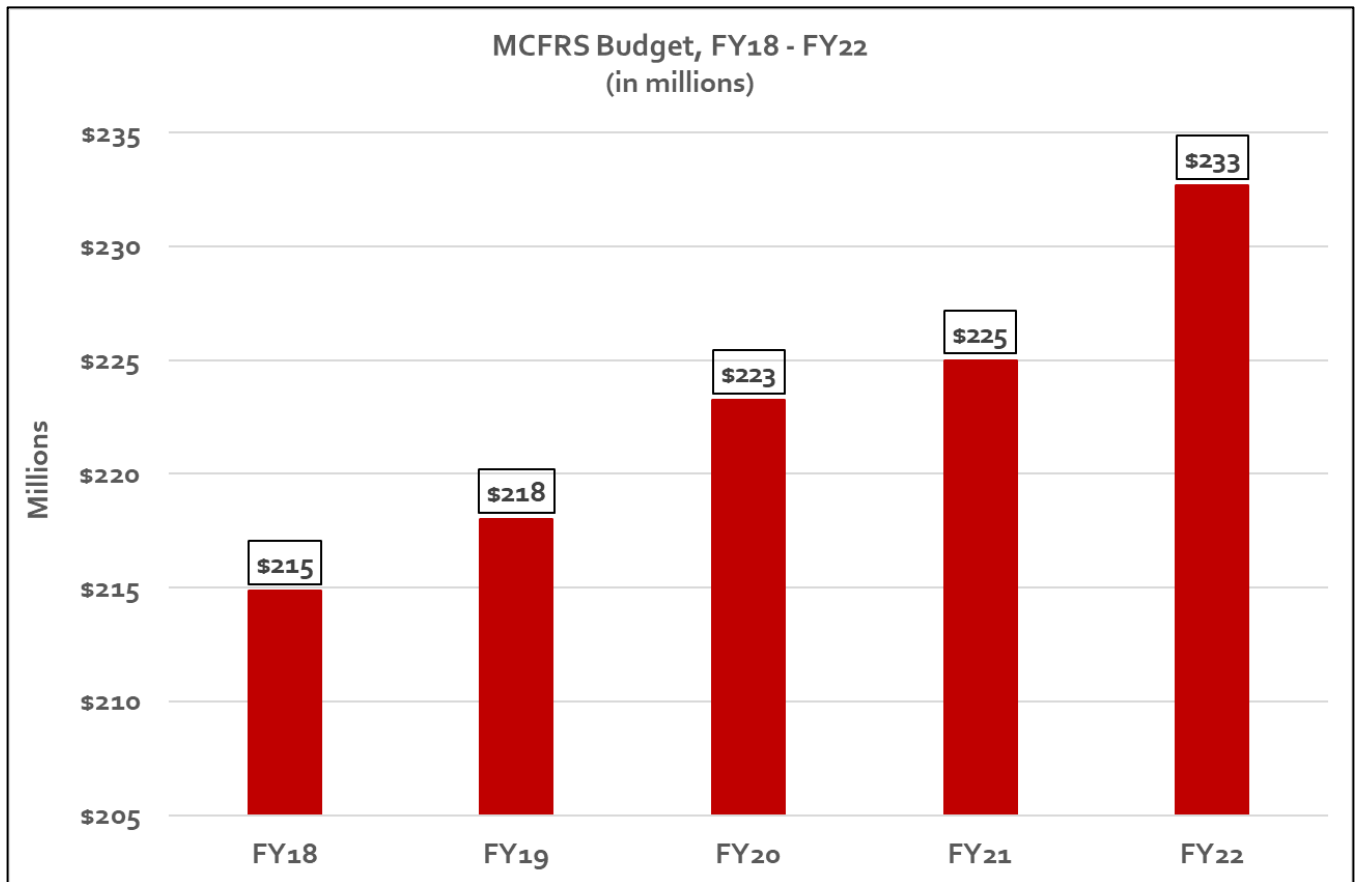


Despite the shutdown of many services last year, the MCFRS CRR Section is proud to have continued working with County agencies and local non-profits to provide free car seats to families in need. In 2020, CRR provided 58 car seats to local families.



FY22 WORKPLAN

At the time of this report's publication, FY22 has already begun. The MCFRS approved budget for FY22 is 3.4% higher than the FY21 approved budget.



This year's budget helps address the following initiatives:

- Adding firefighter/rescuer positions to the MCFRS budget to reduce the need for overtime while firefighter/rescuers are engaged in full-time training to become paramedics.
- Funding to continue deployment of cell phone technology on all apparatus to support new alternative destination and telemedicine programs, and to provide a backup communication contingency.
- Adding a daywork ambulance to provide enhanced EMS transport capacity.
- Adding a paramedic chase car to improve advanced life support (ALS) emergency medical service delivery in the County, which will improve ALS availability.
- Adding a facility maintenance manager (program manager I) to manage day-to-day requests.
- Replacing 27 aging heart monitor/defibrillators assigned to advanced life support transport units, paramedic chase cars, and engines to ensure the operability of critical life-saving equipment through short term financing.

- Adding funds to support an audit of MCFRS operations and administration with a focus on optimizing resource deployment, identifying efficiencies, and addressing racial equity and social justice.

In addition to these initiatives, the MCFRS will be working on the following activities in FY22:

- Montgomery County will be undergoing a [Public Protection Classification Review](#) by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), beginning in the summer of 2021. ISO analyzes data and information pertaining to fire protection efforts using their Fire Suppression Rating Schedule, then classifies the jurisdiction with a rating between 1 and 10. A rating of 1 represents superior fire protection, while 10 indicates that minimum standards have not been met. Montgomery County's current classification for urban, hydranted areas is 2; for rural, non-hydranted areas, the classification is 4.
- The 2016-2022 Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan expires at the end of FY22. The process to update the master plan will begin soon and will seek to engage many members of the department, the Fire & Emergency Services Commission, the International Association of Fire Fighters – Local 1664, the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association, and many of our community partners, such as the Regional Service Centers and Citizen Advisory Boards.
- The 2020 U.S. Census Data is expected to be released in its entirety by the end of 2021. Once that occurs, the Planning and Accreditation Section will update the MCFRS community risk assessment. A risk assessment is basically the identification of potential and likely risks within a particular community, and the process of prioritizing those risks. It is the critical initial step in emergency preparedness, and allows MCFRS to plan, prepare and deploy appropriate resources to attain a desired outcome.
- The Planning & Accreditation Section is gearing up to launch significant efforts in preparation for the next onsite accreditation assessment, tentatively scheduled for August 2023. Preparation involves assembling multiple representatives from across the department together to draft the Self-Assessment Manual (SAM), which is required to be completed prior to the onsite review. The SAM framework requires that MCFRS respond to 11 categories of performance indicators, detailing the current status of the specific resource, program, or process; evaluating, measuring, or comparing the effectiveness over the accreditation period (last five years), and describing how the agency will improve, maintain, or sustain each indicator.



- The Division of Human Resources is immersed with hiring activities, including the administration of entrance exams and CPAT mentoring/testing, as we aim for Recruit Class #49 to start in early September with a cadre of previously trained (firefighter 2 & EMT) personnel for a shortened class, and Recruit Class #50 to start in early January for the full 26 weeks. The FY22 budget funds up to 72 positions.
- The MCFRS Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program continues to work diligently with County partners to address the number of patients encountered by MCFRS with acute behavioral health and substance abuse problems. The lack of 24/7 access to triage, evaluation, and crisis stabilization services, including sobering facilities for substance abuse clients, is a significant challenge in Montgomery County. Foundational efforts for creating a restoration center have begun, but it could be three to five years before it's completed, and interim solutions and alternative destination options are needed. MCFRS is in the process of partnering with the Crisis Center to provide mental telehealth services to patients in the field. MCFRS also plans to utilize the Crisis Center as an Alternative Destination drop-off site for patients who don't need medical care from the emergency department. And the Crisis Center has recently applied for a grant that would allow them to renovate some existing space to establish a clinical setting for these patients. This will provide an alternative destination for those patients who need behavioral or mental health treatment and prevent placing an unnecessary strain on local emergency departments.
- EMIHS applied for a grant from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) to implement an Emergency Communications Nurse System (ECNS) at the ECC, an additional part of the Emergency Triage, Treatment, and Transportation (ET3) program. The ECNS is a triage system comprised of over 200 protocols designed to be implemented within a communications center and used in conjunction with the priority dispatch system. ECNS offers the benefit of a potential reduction in the number of EMS transports of patients with low-acuity determinants. If awarded the grant during the first quarter of FY22, EMIHS will begin working on pre-implementation steps, to include evaluating call types eligible for ECNS processing; developing business processes to transfer ECNS-eligible calls from MCPD call takers to ECNS personnel, and vice-versa; and identifying potential vendors to contract for staffing.
- The Community Risk Reduction Section will be focusing on partnerships in FY22, particularly those that were put on-hold in 2020, and establishing new community partners, including:
 - Specific social service agencies to ensure that families are properly vetted, and car seats are given to those who cannot afford them.
 - Hospitals with large maternity programs (e.g., Shady Grove) to ensure they are aware of the car seat safety program. CRR has already developed a



good working relationship with Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring - they refer many of their patients to our program and one of their Maternity Department employees participates in one car seat event per month.

- Business and other County agencies that will partner and allow us to spread the car seat events throughout the County (regularly scheduled car seat events occur in Aspen Hill, Takoma Park, and Germantown currently).
- Community groups that can help us conduct outreach to the various ethnic communities throughout Montgomery County, to ensure that we are reaching all residents and groups in the County.



Let's
keep in
touch!



Follow MCFRS on Twitter, [@MCFRS](#), visit our [website](#), or catch up on the latest safety tips on our [blog](#)!