

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Division of Volunteer Services

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS
LOSAP, Md Tax Credit Program, Tuition Assistance, Ride-On,
Recreation and MCVFRA Contractual Benefits

LOSAP

The Length of Service Awards Program, also known as LOSAP, allows local fire and rescue department (LFRD) volunteers to earn a monetary award based upon age and years of active service. One year of active service is determined by a requirement that a member earn 50 or more total points in a calendar year in the following categories: training, drills, station sleep-ins or stand-bys, holding elected or appointed positions, meeting attendance, station responses/calls, military service and collateral duties. Fire rescue responders and administrative members both qualify for this award. To receive credit for sleep-ins or responses, a volunteer must be active on the IECS list at the time the responses occur.

LOSAP provides a monetary award for 10 years of active service with an age requirement of 65, 15 years of service with an age requirement of 60, and 25 years of active service with no age requirement. Awards range from \$92 per month and go up to a maximum of \$345. Annual increases are provided to recipients who stay active and meet the 50 points required annually (\$9.20 per month for those with 10-24 years; and \$11.50 per month for those with 25 or more years).

A \$5,000 death benefit is also payable to the volunteer's designee provided the minimum number of active years required for an award is met (currently 10 years). In addition, a surviving spouse or domestic partner is entitled to receive 50% of the volunteer's length of service benefit for which the volunteer met the years of service requirement.

Other benefits available to active LFRD volunteers include free ride-on bus pass and tuition assistance (currently \$1630 for active members) for volunteers that have earned 50 LOSAP points in the last calendar year, and discounts at recreational facilities or classes as if the volunteer were a County employee. Active volunteers may also apply for "County employee" only positions.

Maryland State Income Tax Credit Program

The Maryland Income Tax Subtraction Program allows a volunteer who meets certain requirements to receive a \$3,500 credit on their Maryland State income taxes. To qualify for the subtraction modification, a volunteer **with less than 25 years of service must have been active in the past calendar year and have at least 36 months of qualifying service in the last ten years.** A qualifying member must have a minimum of 50 points and those points must be earned in at least two categories. A member with **25 or more years of qualifying service need not have been active in the previous calendar year; however, the member must still qualify with at least 36 months in the last 10 years.**

In order to receive a transit bus pass, tuition assistance, or an individual recreation discount, a volunteer must have been certified as LOSAP active for the previous calendar year (earning 50 points or more). The following process should be followed:

Ride-On Bus Pass

Please send an email to Linda.dowdy@montgomerycountymd.gov, LOSAP Administrator, to request the Ride-On pass and attached a digital photograph to use for your ID. Once your LOSAP active status for the previous calendar year is confirmed, an email request will be sent by the LOSAP Administrator to the MCFRS Internal Affairs Office to process the pass. The Ride-On pass will then be mailed interoffice to the volunteer's station.

Tuition Assistance Program

A Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of the MCVFRA, MCFRS, and OHR outlines requirements for this program and information relating to the program and the application are located on OHR's website and the Division of Volunteer Services PIMS website:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/ohr/ResourceLibrary/RLMain1.cfm?m=15&c=62>

Please review the requirements carefully, and submit application following the procedures outlined in the link above. After the President of the LFRD signs, the original and one copy of the application should be forwarded to the LOSAP Administrator (EOB, 12th Floor) who will obtain the Division Chief's signature and verify active status, log in the application, and hand carry the application to the Office of Human Resources (OHR). *Please remember to include proof of payment if applying for reimbursement and, if applicable, include a copy of your grade or certificate of completion from any previous course paid for by OHR. **These are done on a fiscal year basis (any course started within the fiscal year July 1 – June 30 must be presented for payment within that timeframe or it will be denied).***

Recreation Discount

Volunteers who are interested in obtaining individual discounts on Department of Recreation (DOR) sponsored classes or the use of gyms or pools, must complete a recreation application and forward the form directly to the Department of Recreation. Please be sure to complete the part of the form that indicates you are a volunteer with the MCFRS. Note: Family/team activities are excluded from this discount. The LOSAP Administrator will supply each year's certification list to the Department of Recreation for verification that an applicant was LOSAP active the previous calendar year.

Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association and Montgomery County Bargaining Agreement

Montgomery County Government recognizes the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Association (MCVFRA) as the duly authorized representative of the Local fire and Rescue Departments (LFRD) in the direct negotiation process set forth in Chapter 21-6 of the Montgomery County Code. The current agreement is for the period 7/1/2008 – 6/30/2011. In 2007, the MCVFRA became the first volunteer organization to bargain for volunteer benefits, such as improved death benefits, additional medical expenses associated with annual physicals, apparel, and nominal fee payments. The Agreement is posted on www.mcvfra.org.

'Volunteer' for purposes of the contractual agreement means any person who is a member of an LFRD and has completed a probationary period of at least one calendar year. Highlights of some of the negotiated benefits include:

Nominal Fee:

An active volunteer as defined in Section 21-21(a) of the Montgomery County Code shall receive either:

- (1) a nominal fee of \$300 (July 1, 2009) or \$400 (July 1, 2010); OR
- (2) a nominal fee of \$500 (July 1, 2009) or \$600 (July 1, 2010) if the active volunteers is on the Integrated Emergency Command Structure (IECS) certified list; and received the maximum allowable Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP) points for department or station responses as specified in Section 21-21(k)(6) of the Montgomery County Code for the previous calendar year; and received the maximum allowable LOSAP points for sleep-in and stand-by as specified in Section 21-21(k)(3) of the Montgomery County Code in the previous calendar year.

Uniforms and Equipment

Winter coats are currently supplied to active volunteers (and must be returned in the event a volunteer no longer qualifies as LOSAP active). In July 2010, leather turnout boots and gear bags will be supplied to active volunteers as defined above and who are on the IECS and belong to an LFRD with an approved Stand-By Program.