

Arlington Fire Department - Management and Labor's shared perspective on Inclusion and Diversity



The Arlington Fire Department and Arlington Professional Fire Fighters Association share in the basic belief that inclusion and diversity within our Organizations is essential. Inclusion and diversity is respecting and valuing each other's contributions and differences. The Arlington Fire Department is made up of individuals from differing backgrounds, cultures and diversity of perspectives which have made us a great team as well as an outstanding fire service organization.

We believe that in order for our Department to achieve organizational excellence, it requires the inclusion of all people, recognizing and respecting the unique difference in outlooks, perspectives, and ideas. We must also respect individuals, even though they may not look, act, or think like us. In order for the Arlington Fire Department to be a successful public service entity, we must engage in a direct and active effort to include different and unique perspectives from inside our organization and the community we serve.

Our "family" within the Arlington Fire Department has many diverse characteristics. Obvious differences such as race, gender, and other physical differences are apparent. But, there are other differences that aren't so apparent, which may include a broad list of issues and/or perspectives that make up who we are as individuals. We believe that all of us should recognize, respect and value those differences and other variables that influence personal perspectives, whatever they may be. Intolerance of those differences is unacceptable.

We believe inclusion and Diversity creates increased productivity, attraction and retention of top talent, and an improved relationship with our internal team as well as our external customers. Leaders within the Arlington Fire Department have a responsibility to foster an environment where an employee feels respected and valued. This in turn will develop an employee who will be more engaged in their work, be willing to build stronger relationships with peers and the community, as well as become more innovative. Our desire is to create an environment where everyone wants to come to work each day and be productive.

Inclusion and Diversity helps create a workforce that better represents the community in which the Arlington Fire Department serves. This enables us to better understand our community and build relationships within our organization, and trust among our team. It is critical for the future of the Arlington Fire Department to attract, motivate, and retain individuals who are talented, highly skilled and qualified and at the same time be more reflective of the diverse community in which we work.

The Arlington Fire Department is an HONORABLE organization. It is an organization that demands we respect each other and not allow for an environment that may actively or passively encourage negative or divisive behavior among Department members. Issues of intolerant nature will be immediately and effectively addressed by Department leaders. Any conduct, act or behavior that is contrary to the values of our organization will not be tolerated.

We will treat others as we expect to be treated.

After all, we are "family." We all are individuals and our individuality will be respected throughout our organization. Our focus as a Department will be on what binds us together as a team and what is in the interest of our community. We will respect our differences as we work towards "unity of the team" and our shared purpose of meeting the needs and expectations of those we serve.

Together we will "walk the talk" and we will actively respond to those who act in an intolerant way to Department members or to the community we serve. We have an obligation to come together as a team and to focus our abilities towards achieving our organizations' purpose, which is serving our community. While we are all individuals, a unified team is a priority in the Arlington Fire Department.