

## **MASS FIRE ACADEMY DIRECTOR PROFILE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Fire Services (DFS) has retained the services of the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston to assist in the recruitment of a new Director for the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. This Profile draws upon our discussions with administrators, division heads, managers, staff and instructors. It describes our understanding of the organization, the challenges that lie ahead for the successful candidate, and the professional and personal characteristics an ideal candidate will possess.

### **MASSACHUSETTS FIREFIGHTING ACADEMY**

Created by Chapter 842 of the Acts of 1971, the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy (Academy) provides fire training to municipal fire service personnel at no cost to cities and towns. The mission of the Academy is to strategize, develop, and deliver state of the art and timely training for the fire service personnel of the cities, towns, and fire districts of the Commonwealth and appropriate public and private sector organizations, to enhance the public safety of the citizens and through the governing body, the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, certification of firefighters and to maintain the economic growth and stability of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Academy's flagship program is the nine-week Career Firefighter Recruit Training program. The Academy also offers over 300 topical continuing education courses and fire officer training.

The Academy is located at the newly expanded and renovated 18 acre DFS campus in the Town of Stow, midway between Boston and Worcester. The training facility, with a glassed in cafeteria that provides a view to the drill yard and a link to the DFS campus, consists of an administrative building for Academy staff, five classrooms, computer lab, locker rooms and physical training area for staff and students. The drill yard consists of a new, fully equipped fire station housing seven pieces of fire apparatus, Special Operations vehicles, a vehicle maintenance shop and equipment room. There is a spacious paved drill yard with a four-story Class A burn building, six-story training tower, confined space training prop, search and rescue house, drafting pit and flammable gas training ground that includes liquefied natural gas and liquefied propane gas props allowing for multiple evaluations using realistic simulations.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE**

The Massachusetts Fire Academy is a division of the Department of Fire Services, the sole agency in state government responsible for the overall policy, leadership and coordination of state fire safety, training, enforcement and response services. By statute, the State Fire Marshal is the head of the department, which in addition to the

Academy, includes four other divisions: Division of Fire Safety; Hazardous Materials Response Division; Special Operations Division and Administrative Services Division.

The policy making body for the Academy is the Massachusetts Fire Training Council, a 15-member body appointed by the Governor. The Council has statutory authority to promulgate rules and regulations for the operation of the Academy and has the authority to approve courses and curriculum offered. The Fire service certification programs are designed to stimulate professional development in the fire service by allowing firefighters to demonstrate their ability to meet professional qualification standards. The Academy plays a critical role in the professional development of firefighters by providing top-notch training and certification in a wide range of knowledge, skills and abilities.

### **EXECUTIVE OFFICE OVERVIEW**

- **Staffing.** The Academy employs 16 full-time personnel with responsibilities supporting the Academy including administration, registration, scheduling, certification and training programs. Additionally, the Academy employs nearly 400 part-time instructors, primarily active or retired members of fire services who conduct the training programs serving approximately 13,000 firefighters and fire officers each year.
- **Budget.** The Academy has an annual operating budget of \$3.7 million. The Director works with the program coordinators to align the budget with policy direction from DFS. While the DFS budget requires appropriation from the state legislature, the primary source of funding is through assessments of insurance providers in Massachusetts.

### **CHALLENGES FOR THE ACADEMY DIRECTOR**

- **Balancing long tradition of fire training environment with accountability to higher-level organization.** The Massachusetts Fire Academy predates the existence of its parent organization, the Department of Fire Services, which was created in 1996. Many current trainers have many years of experience in the field and are proud of the level and quality of services they have provided to the Academy over the years. The new Director will need to respect the positive traditions of the Academy while also maintaining accountability to the State Fire Marshal and DFS. The new Director will require the leadership, team building and communications skills necessary to operate in this environment while advancing the mission of the Academy and DFS.
- **Being responsive to the needs of fire departments across the state.** The ability to structure training programs meeting the certification requirements of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and the ability to move large enough numbers of recruits through the basic firefighter training classes each year to meet the staffing levels of various departments and districts is very challenging. The Director

will be required to have the people skills to deal with local fire chiefs, knowledge of municipal needs and the ability to gain familiarity with the Academy's own breadth of program offerings, strong recruit training and professional development capabilities for line and senior officers in order to manage the expectations of the fire departments it serves.

- **Introducing new technology to replace legacy systems.** Legacy computer systems for collecting, storing, and reporting data on training, registration, scheduling and certification are antiquated and systems are outdated and inflexible. Those outdated systems limit the Academy's ability to implement all of the innovation that is possible to improve the Academy's efficiency, operations and outcomes. New database and reporting systems that streamline registration, scheduling and training procedures and provide easily accessible data for policy decisions are necessary to establish and maintain effective, efficient and significantly improved Academy administration and operations. The Director will have to work with Academy and DFS staff to fully operationalize the new systems, develop updated procedures for using them and ensure adequate training for staff.
- **Manage new training facility in Springfield.** The DFS has acquired property for a firefighter-training site in Springfield as a satellite facility that will significantly expand the Academy's capacity for training for western and central Massachusetts. This will require the development of programs, hiring and assigning of instructors and the purchasing of equipment. The Director will be required to manage the complex process of establishing a branch school at a satellite location, successfully interact with diverse state and local agencies, oversee construction/renovation of facilities and unify any cultural differences between the training programs.

### **THE IDEAL CANDIDATE**

The Department of Fire Services seeks a Director who is a seasoned manager in an environment of similar complexity who can provide effective leadership, communication, and management to a specialized training organization steeped in tradition. This is not a learning position.

#### ***Personal***

The next Director needs to be:

- Able to demonstrate unquestioned integrity in interactions with staff, state and local officials and students.
- Able to communicate effectively and build consensus among all elements of the Academy, DFS and fire services; a diplomatic approach to communication is required.

- Able to work cooperatively within the department on the establishment of annual goals and objectives for the Academy and its departments, update the Fire Marshal and staff on progress and actively participate in the annual review of results and operations.
- Able and willing to play a highly visible role in the fire services community. The ideal candidate must participate broadly across the leadership structure of the services and be a champion of the Academy.
- Comfortable engaging directly with fire service professionals, Academy management and staff, other division managers of DFS, the Massachusetts Fire Training Council and when called upon, Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, state legislature, and other state and national agencies, organizations and media. The Director must have sufficient direct engagement with the fire service community so that he/she can gain thorough understanding of the fire services culture.
- Able and willing to work openly with Academy program coordinators and instructors. A direct, collegial, facilitative style that fosters joint problem solving is needed. The Director can have no agenda beyond being professional and ensuring that service delivery meets the Academy's goals for delivering a comprehensive statewide training system.
- Able to be a vocal and positive spokesperson for the Academy at public forums, state agencies and with the media. The successful candidate must be able to use the status inherent in the Director's position to advance the Academy's goals.
- Able to assume a strong organizational management role. He/she needs to delegate, while maintaining strict accountability. The successful candidate must be direct, facilitative, and clear.
- Able to create and sustain a goal-oriented environment by establishing, maintaining and promoting effective policies and initiatives. The Director will be a genuinely inclusive leader who is capable of exerting influence and direction in a manner that shares successes with elected officials, superiors, subordinates, and the professional community.

### ***Professional***

The Director must be:

- Able to lead a training organization, recognizing that the staff and instructors are the subject matter experts, working with them to develop and support training programs.
- A person who can be a visionary for the Academy and the Fire Service, be innovative and open, while anticipating future needs.

- Able to analyze fire and emergency first responder skill development needs and, working with the other divisions within DFS, develop and deliver the training component. This includes anticipating future training needs, developing appropriate curriculum in a timely manner, and delivering courses with highly competent instructors.
- Capable of formulating plans and strategies for the development, expansion, and construction of the agency's Springfield facility through interaction with the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and work with fire departments with training facilities to provide more localized training.
- Able to provide direction for statewide training of fire service personnel as a member of the Massachusetts Fire Training Council.
- Able to develop and monitor budgets, make decisions about resources, revenue and expenditures. Identify potential grant sources, develop applications in accordance with grant standards, obtain funding, and oversee the dispersal of funds received.
- Willing to work closely with the Superintendent of the National Fire Academy, National Association of Fire Training Directors and other regional, state and national training organizations to identify trends and respond to them through the development and delivery of state of the art training. Provide leadership within the educational community for the standardization of fire science curriculum and granting of credits for fire and emergency training.
- Able to share in the development of DFS-wide policies and procedures, risk management, goals and objectives and participate in the DFS overall program planning activities as a member of DFS senior management.
- In possession of a Bachelor's degree in Education, Business, Fire Science, Engineering Science or a related field or its equivalency in a combination of training education and experience, and five years of experience in an educational or training environment of which at least one year in a managerial capacity. A Master's degree is preferred.

### **The Hiring Process, Schedule & Salary**

The DFS will utilize a Screening Committee to conduct preliminary interviews in confidence. The Screening Committee is expected to review the applications of candidates recommended by the Collins Center in early November and complete preliminary interviews by the end of November. The Screening Committee will recommend finalists to the Fire Marshal for interviews in early December. It is expected the new Director will begin work in January 2015. Applications should be received by November 4, 2014. Compensation is anticipated to be in the mid \$90 to \$100 thousand range, DOQ. The selected candidate will be an employee of the Commonwealth and participate in the Commonwealth's benefit and pension programs.

## How to Apply

Please send your resume with a cover letter addressing the job requirements to this email address: [recruitment.umb@gmail.com](mailto:recruitment.umb@gmail.com). Please combine all of your documents in a single file and include **MFA Director and candidate's last name** in the subject line. Kindly use PDF format, if possible.

Should you have any questions regarding this opportunity, or a recommendation of a colleague, please contact Collins Center Associates Mary Aicardi, 508-215-8992, [Mary.Aicardi@umb.edu](mailto:Mary.Aicardi@umb.edu), or Thatcher Kezer, 978-590-9561, [thatcher.kezer@umb.edu](mailto:thatcher.kezer@umb.edu).

To learn more about the Department of Fire Services, please visit:  
<http://www.mass.gov/eops/agencies/dfs/>

The Department of Fire Services is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. Females, minorities, veterans, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. The Diversity Officer/ADA Coordinator is Ms. Mary Travers (978) 567-3145.

To learn more about the Edward J. Collins Jr. Center for Public Management at UMASS Boston, please visit: [www.umb.edu/cpm](http://www.umb.edu/cpm)