

<b>REGION 1 NORTHERN ROCKIES NATIONAL FIRE SMOKEJUMPER RECRUITER PROGRAM</b>	
<b>Submitting Region/Area:</b> Region 1- Northern Rockies	<b>Submitting District/Unit:</b> Region 1 - Missoula Smokejumpers
<b>Contact Responsible For The Proposal:</b>	
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Brief description of the proposal:

For the past decade the Aerial Fire Depot (AFD) Outreach, Recruitment and Retention Program (ORRP) has taken a serious and meaningful approach to outreach, recruitment and retention with the goal of embracing diversity and providing for a progressive workforce. Components of the program involve outreach, recruitment, selection/hiring, and retention and result in employees equipped with the skills necessary to assist the Forest Service in its mission. Our goal is to formalize and institutionalize this program at the local, regional, and national levels with Regional and National level Fire Recruiters.

The high profile nature of Smokejumping acts as a catalyst for increased diversity for all national fire programs. The model showcases Smokejumping and gains the interest of high quality applicants. Applicants often enter the Forest Service workforce with the personal plan of becoming smokejumpers. Smokejumping experience can be a valuable part of career development, but whether they attain that goal or not, through the Aerial Fire Depot (AFD) program, they will become highly valued members of our workforce.

The Fire Recruiter positions will work to transition the accumulated contacts and relationships for the continuity of the success. In the first year of the proposal, one developmental Fire Recruiter position would be based in Region 1, and one in Region 4. In the second year, the west coast regions will implement developmental Fire Recruiter positions. Finally, in the third year, a National Fire Recruiter position would be implemented to spearhead national efforts to increase diversity. This position will lead, oversee and be an active participant in “on the ground” efforts to increase underrepresented populations in the Forest Service. Due to National level reductions, Region 1 could host the “lead” position, with responsibility for development and deployment of the total program/concept, with National level workforce diversity funding.

It is our belief that the great success of the AFD outreach and recruitment program will multiply exponentially when implemented at the national level. The Fire Recruiter positions will ensure that lessons learned up to this point would be preserved. In addition, it will increase the knowledge base and enthusiasm for diversity in the workforce for the future.



Other fire programs have recognized the success of the AFD program and are willing to make the commitment to support and establish the AFD model.

What is the total contribution being requested from F&AM for this Proposal?

This table is a breakdown of what is being requested to expand the current efforts being put forth in Region 1 and the Aerial Fire Depot. Each Region will have developmental positions that will work within their areas and coordinate with other Regions in increasing a highly effective and diverse workforce. This in turn will continue to build on the successes currently at a Regional level, expanding to a National level.

<b>National Fire Recruiter Coordinator Position</b>		<b>Year-2008</b>	<b>Year-2009</b>	<b>Year-2010</b>
	Wages GS-9 Assistance	\$25,000	\$25,000	National Coordinator position Implemented this year at a GS-9/11
	Travel expenses:	\$15,000	\$15,000	
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>	
<b>Regional Fire Recruiter Developmental Positions</b>		Region 1 and 4	Region 1,4 and west coast regions	Region 1,4 and west coast regions
	Wages	\$20,000x 2	\$10,000x 4	\$15,000 x 4
	Travel expenses	\$15,000x 2	\$15,000x 4	\$15,000 x 4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>
<b>Requested Total</b>		<b>\$110,000</b>	<b>\$140,000</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>

Providing funding to create a National Fire Recruiter Trainer accomplishes the following:

- establishes a standard for Workforce Management, Outreach, Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention
- provides points of contact and prospective sights for outreach and recruitment to the Forest Service,
- creates and standardizes mentoring success models for others to follow throughout the nation,
- provides leadership and accountability regarding workforce diversity directly to the WO.

Providing funding to support the Fire Recruiter Developmental Positions accomplishes the following:

- extends the employment tour for employees that desire to participate in the AFD Outreach, Recruitment, and Retention model of success,

- expands on the proven successful diversity model,
- continues and strives to expand successes to West Coast Regions Five and Six in 2009.

Signatures:

Regional Fire Director	/s/ George Weldon
Regional Representative to F&AM WDC	/s/ Edmund Ward
Smokejumper Program Manager	/s/ Edmund Ward
Regional Civil Rights Director	/s/ Debby Wivholm
Unit manager	/s/ George Weldon

**1. Workforce Diversity Management:**

Outreach- This proposal focuses on the creation of a National Fire Recruiter Coordinator position. This person would be in charge of the training of new regional positions to be mentored and trained to assist in the efforts to increase workforce diversity within Fire Programs Nationally. By having a single point of contact and extra recruiter positions, efforts to establish relationships and reach under-represented populations can be maximized. By expanding efforts with more recruiters who have the same goals and objectives, numbers of those being reached at job fairs, schools, environmental programs, on the fireline, and at Forest Service sponsored events will meet an all time high. With the implementation of these positions, establishing relationships and recruitment of qualified individuals will be greatly enhanced.

Recruitment- The lure of smokejumping can be a benefit when looking for qualified candidates who can be placed in various duties with the Forest Service, and more specifically, fire. As these recruiters visit schools, job fairs, career days, and common meetings, they will have the knowledge of what qualifications would be necessary for Type II crews, Type I crews, Helitack crews, Smokejumpers, and District fire fighters. With this knowledge the recruiters will be able to help place these individuals in positions where they would be successful and have the ability to move on to other careers within the Forest Service. These recruiters will not only focus on fire related positions, but other Forest Service careers as well.

Hiring & Selection- All recruiters having the same approach and objectives when hiring candidates will result in consistency and ensure that the need for a more diverse workforce within the Forest Service will be met. Hiring will emphasize selection of employees who support diversity and managements desire to move in new directions. With recruiters focusing on other positions outside fire, *all* units with the Forest Service will benefit from their efforts.

Retention- A mentoring program established to aid in transitioning firefighters to the smokejumper environment has been one of the successes of the Missoula smokejumpers and other programs at the AFD (Great Northern Type 2 IA Crew). Along with mentoring, it is important to have a workplace that supports the goal of a diverse workforce. Outreach, recruitment and hiring are only the first steps. An environment that continues to nurture and promote diversity is also important. A supportive work environment will continue to be in place

for individuals from under-represented populations. Employees immersed in this environment will want to remain in place and will strive to enhance it.

## **2. Management Support:**

Although diversity is a point of contention for some, management nationally and within the region continues to see the importance of having a diverse workforce. Outreach and Recruitment are dynamic processes that require creativity and energy. The Fire Recruiter Developmental Positions will only be successful with the support of management. It is essential that quality individuals with a passion for people and a firm grasp on the desired diversity goals are put in these positions to ensure success.

From the beginning, the Region 1 workforce diversity efforts have always been supported by the Regional Forester on through the immediate supervisors directly in contact with those being hired. With continued support, as well as support from the Regional Fire Director, Regional Civil Rights Director, and Smokejumper Program Manager, recruitment goals within Workforce Diversity will continue to climb. Management support for this proposal will enable our efforts to become national and expand throughout the entire Forest Service.

## **3. Scope and Sustainability:**

A national program is needed to establish successes from the regional level to a national level. The proven success of the Aerial Fire Depot Outreach, Recruitment and Retention Program serves as the basis for this proposal. Region 1 and 4 Smokejumper Base Management personnel strongly believe they have the foundation and experience to take a small, but highly effective program, and reach a nation-wide audience in an effort to enhance the mission of the Forest Service and other natural resource agencies. Region 1 personnel believe that diversity is a critical component for future Forest Service success.

## **4. Partners and Shared Funding/Resources:**

The Region 1 and Region 4 joint proposal would share the amount awarded to fund the resources necessary to establish the positions requested. A partnership to share leadership at the crew boss level is being established with Job Corp. Through this partnership the firefighting force benefits from leadership experiences, and Job Corp benefits by gaining leadership and positive role models.

AFD recruiters have combined their limited resources with financial resources from colleges and universities to make recruiters available to students in diverse locales such as the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Alabama A&M, and New Mexico State University. While in the proximity to these institutions, recruiters have connected with local high schools, community colleges, and tribal organizations in an effort to bring the message to a larger audience. While in the Chicago, Illinois area, AFD recruiters have forged a working relationship with the Illinois-based Midewin Hotshot Crew. This crew is specifically organized to recruit individuals from inner-city communities. This association with Midewin has established additional connections with agencies and organizations in the greater Chicago metropolitan area that focus on

expanding opportunities for inner-city individuals especially those of African-American and Latino ethnicity.

## **5. Integration with Civil Rights and Human Capital Management Professionals:**

There has always been strong support from the Regional Civil Rights Director for the Missoula Smokejumper and Aerial Fire Depot's efforts in increasing Workforce Diversity. Debby Wivholm, Region 1 Civil Rights Director, has been integral in these efforts, and has ensured that Civil Rights plays an active role.

In the Northern Region, the concept of having a diverse workforce, which provides services to a diverse public, is central to a successful diversity strategy. Involving underserved publics and increasing workforce diversity in the Northern Region are directly related to the future success of the agency. Key to this success is ensuring that the Forest Service organization of the future is being hired today.

As current leaders reach retirement and leave the Service, future leaders must be in place. To reach, hire and retain future leaders that are a reflection of the publics we serve, we must seek out non-traditional communities, schools and a diverse applicant pool. Once we have reached and selected from that diverse applicant pool, individuals committed to the success of recruitment efforts take a personal interest in coaching, training, mentoring and following the personal development of these new employees. These efforts in turn are shared with future applicants and the job of outreach, recruitment and retention becomes easier, more successful, and is shared across regional boundaries to contribute not only to a diverse fire organization in Region 1, but a diverse organization Forest Service wide.

This project is clearly the type of project that contributes to an ideal civil rights program, a cornerstone of MD 715. In addition, the AFD efforts include ensuring new employees receive a mix of knowledge, skill development, attention to safety, and understanding and respect of team commitment which serves employees and the agency very well.

## **6. Management Directive (MD) 715:**

Even with the successes in R1 and the AFD, there are still some challenges and barriers hampering the efforts to increase diversity. Some of the barriers that recruiters face while making their outreach and recruitment efforts and some of our proposed actions are:

- Barrier: Inability to hire "On the spot" of those quality individuals that meet qualifications and are strong diversity candidates.
- Action: Ability for recruiters to make offers on the spot and ensure that quality candidates are not lost in the hiring process.
  
- Barrier: Not having a positive work environment that will mentor and retain those diversity individuals.
- Action: With increased recruitment efforts from recruiters who have the same objectives, they will be able to place individuals in locations and positions that will allow them to be

successful. When a new employee of a program is successful, this proves positive on the program, which in turn creates a positive, progressive work environment.

- Barrier: Misconception that there's a lack of career opportunities in Fire and the Forest Service.
- Action: Having knowledgeable recruiters who have qualifications in fire that demonstrate success models of employees that have created successful careers in fire and explain examples of career opportunities within the Forest Service.
- Barrier: Misconception by certain individuals that they may not be able to be physically successful in the job, women in particular.
- Action: Recruiters who can provide success stories of individuals who have successfully overcome initial physical shortcomings to carve out careers in fire and smokejumping.

## **7. Measurement of Success:**

Success will be the establishment and expansion of a National Fire Outreach and Recruitment program. The creation of this national program that has the ability to reach out to more of the underrepresented populations and bring them into the Forest Service family, will enhance the work and the work environment that we so greatly value. The success of this program will be evident in the diverse cross section represented in the next generation of Forest Service employees

Although tracking numbers is the easiest way to quantify and measure the numbers of under-represented individuals within a workforce, this will not be the only measurement. Tracking individuals who are reached and successfully placed in programs that are in full support of increasing workforce diversity will have more impact. The important measurement of success for this proposal will be the placement of even one individual into a program that will mentor and strive to retain them, in hopes of maintaining a work environment that will continue to expand.

Other measurements of success will be the expansion of the AFD success model to other Regions, in particular, Regions 4, 5, and 6. The National Fire Recruitment Coordinator will help mentor and consult their regional counterparts. The National Coordinator will lead by example and continue to do their part in the outreach and recruitment of the under-represented populations.