



ROSLYN FIRE DISTRICT · NASSAU COUNTY, NEW YORK

# Answering the Call

*Why a thoughtful investment in our volunteers protects every taxpayer in the district*

Flower Hill

A proposal to enhance the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP)

# Amendments to benefit our volunteer firefighters



MONTHLY BENEFIT

\$20 → **\$30**

*per year of service*



SERVICE CREDIT CAP

30 → **50**

*years of creditable service*

WHAT IT COSTS THE DISTRICT

**\$140K**

Estimated incremental cost per year, district-wide  
(per the program actuary)

COST TO FLOWER HILL

**\$10,298** (~7.4%)

**≈ \$19.84 per parcel**

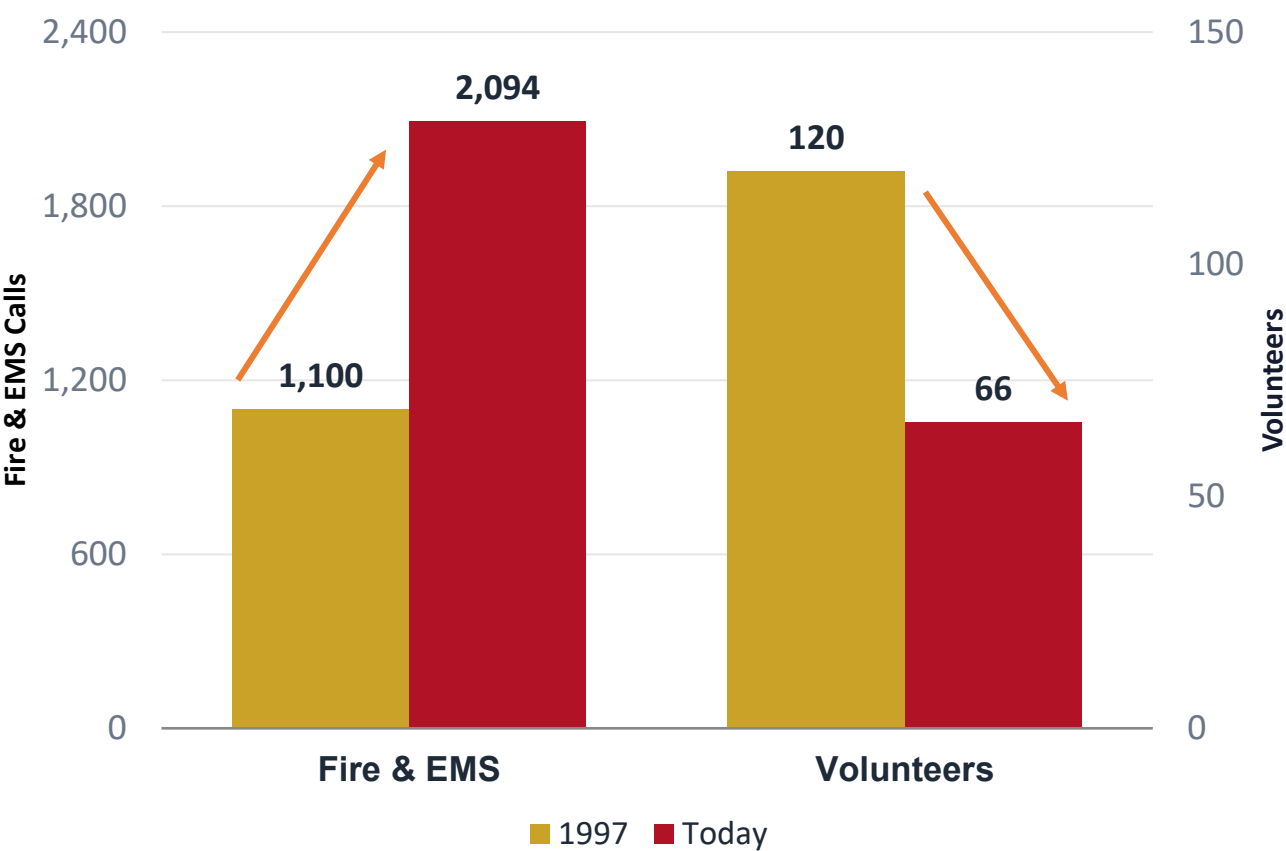
*Assumes ~519 taxable parcels in the district*

WHAT IT SAVES TAXPAYERS

**\$Millions**

What a paid service would cost taxpayers in the  
Roslyn Fire District each year — the burden  
volunteers keep off the tax rolls

# Twice the calls. Half the firefighters.



Volunteer numbers are only Roslyn Highlands (Roslyn Rescue would be comparable)

≈ 2×

as many emergency calls as in 1997

≈ 1/2

the active volunteers we had in 1997

*Fewer neighbors are carrying a fast-growing load — the gap is widening every year.*

# Nassau's volunteer departments are under strain



## A first in county history

In 2025 the Floral Park Centre Fire Company dissolved after roughly a century of service — the first time a Nassau County fire department has closed for lack of volunteers.



## From 10,000+ to under 7,000

Nassau's volunteer ranks have fallen from more than 10,000 to fewer than 7,000 — for a county of about 1.5 million residents.



## Five departments for one fire

A recent house fire in Mineola required five departments to respond just to assemble enough manpower to put it out.



## 71 departments, nearly all volunteer

Of Nassau's 71 fire departments, only one has paid firefighters at all. The rest depend entirely on neighbors who drop everything to respond.

# The same crisis, statewide and nationwide

## NEW YORK STATE

-32%

Volunteer firefighters statewide fell from 110,000 (1998) to about 75,000 (2021)

+29%

Emergency calls rose over that same period — more work, fewer hands

6

Volunteer departments forced to shut down in New York in 2025 alone

40-yr

Volunteer firefighter numbers are now at a 40-year low

## NATIONWIDE (U.S.)

-23%

Volunteer firefighters fell from 827,000 (2008) to 635,000 (2023)

+70%

Growth in calls to U.S. fire departments since 2008 — about 25M to 42M a year.

3×

Call volume has tripled over the last 35 years, driven by medical calls.

~2 in 3

Roughly two of every three U.S. firefighters are volunteers.

Reference periods differ — New York figures span 1998–2025; national figures span 2008–2023. Sources: FASNY; NYS Association of Fire Districts; NFPA.

## WHAT'S DRIVING IT

# The simple facts



### **Far steeper training**

Certification now takes many more hours than a generation ago — a real barrier for working adults.



### **Two incomes, longer commutes**

Households where everyone works full-time — often more than one job — can't cover weekday daytime calls.



### **An aging core**

Veterans are retiring out faster than younger recruits arrive to replace them.



### **More calls, more kinds of calls**

Medical, hazmat, and technical-rescue duties have multiplied the workload on every member.



### **Long Island's cost of living**

High housing and living costs push would-be volunteers to work more hours — or leave the area entirely.

# What volunteers already save you

*If New York switched to an all-paid fire service (FASNY\* / Resolution Economics, 2023):*



**31,058**

career firefighters would have to be hired across the state

**+28.4%**

average property-tax increase — and as high as +133% in some counties

**\$8.2B**

one-time cost just to buy the stations, trucks, and equipment

*Nationally, the NVFC\* values volunteer firefighters' donated time at about \$46.9 billion a year.  
\* FASNY = Firefighters Association of the State of New York; NVFC = National Volunteer Fire Council*

# Economic benefit of our community’s volunteers

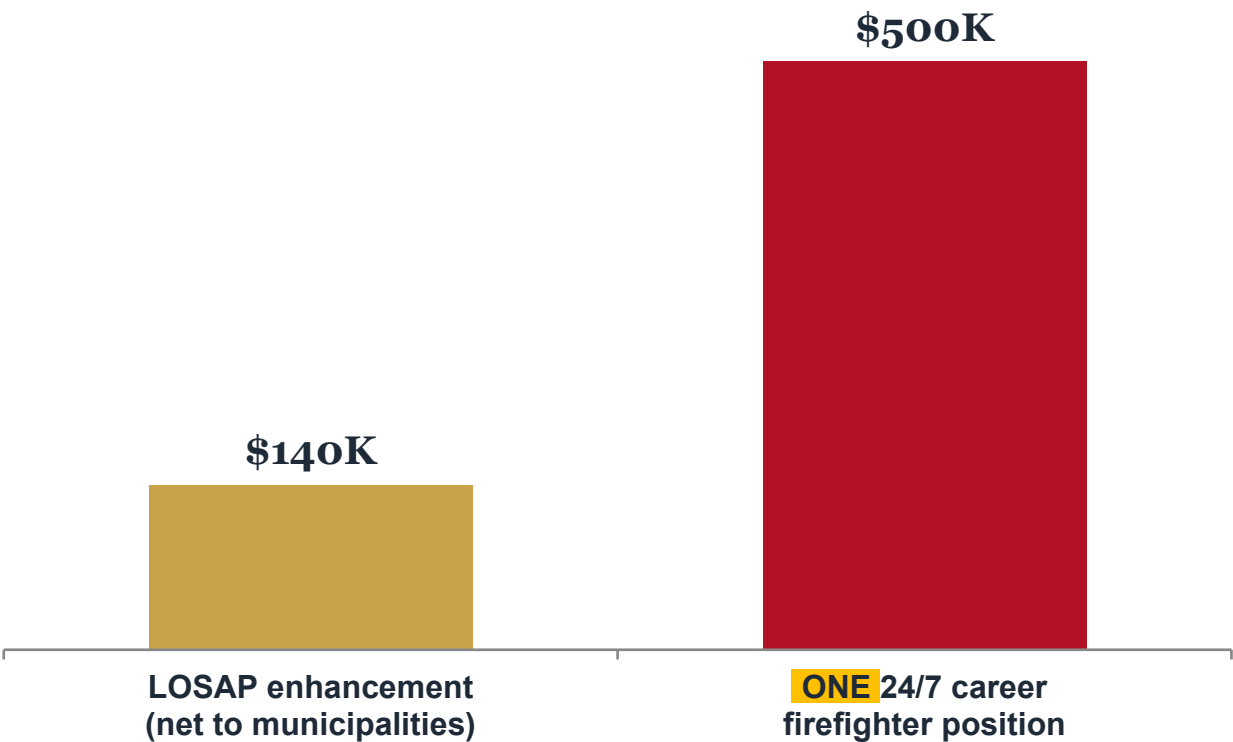
**Staffing one position around the clock takes four to five career firefighters.\***

On Long Island that runs roughly \$400,000–\$600,000 a year – every year, for a single post.

**The entire district-wide LOSAP enhancement costs less than a third of one around-the-clock paid position.**

According to FASNY, if Nassau County moved to all paid departments, it would cost taxpayers an **additional \$151 million per year**, requiring a **6.5% increase in taxes**

The Village of Garden City returned to an all-volunteer fire department and **eliminated its paid firefighter positions** in 2018 **after less than 8 years** of having a paid force due to “economic reasons.”



*Illustrative; loaded cost (wages, benefits, pension, overhead) for continuous 24/7/365 coverage.*

\* Factoring additional staffing to cover holidays, vacations, sick time and other PTO

# Two changes to help solve retention & recruitment

- The benefit hasn't changed since ~1996 and ***inflation has more than halved its value***: \$20 then ≈ \$42 today, so even the proposed \$30 stays ~30% below the original commitment.
- Milestone awards, like LOSAP, ranked the ***second-highest retention intervention***: 58% of members and 61% of leadership said they would help them stay (NVFC 2020).
- NYS statute defines LOSAP as a tool to "***facilitate the recruitment and retention*** of active volunteer firefighters."

**\$20 → \$30 / MONTH**



A stronger signal that a volunteer's time is valued — at the exact moment we're competing with the other demands on people's time: work, family, and volunteer commitments outside the fire and emergency service.

**30 → 50 YEARS**



Rewards the long-tenured veterans who are the operational backbone: the experienced firefighters and officers we are losing fastest and can least afford to replace.

***Together, they make Roslyn a place people join — and stay.***

# Recruitment is our job — and we're on it

- ✓ Active, ongoing recruitment of both firefighters and EMTs across Roslyn Highlands and Roslyn Rescue.
- ✓ Free, fully-funded training through the Nassau County Fire Service Academy and in-house programs — at no cost to the member.
- ✓ Multiple ways to serve: firefighter, EMT, or both, with youth eligibility beginning at age 17 (with parental consent).
- ✓ Recruiting embedded into our service (e.g. recruiting flyers at fire safety events).
- ✓ Participation in the statewide RecruitNY open-house campaign and continued community outreach (e.g. high school).

***We are not asking you to fix this for us. LOSAP is one lever only you can pull.***

# The questions you may be asking



## Why now?

Departments are closing in Nassau for the first time in history. Acting before a crisis is far cheaper than reacting after one.



## Why extend to 50 years?

It costs little and targets exactly the veteran members — and their experience — that we can least afford to lose.



## Is the benefit too rich?

Even at the new maximum, it's reached only after decades of service, and remains a small fraction of any paid alternative.



## Can the budget absorb it?

\$140K shared across the district — pennies against a multimillion-dollar paid department.



THE ASK

# Keep the bell ringing.

For about **\$140,000 a year**, the district keeps a volunteer force that would cost **millions** to replace.

We ask each municipality to vote yes to raise the LOSAP benefit to \$30 per month per year of service and extend service credit to 50 years, and to invest in the volunteers who selflessly protect our communities by continuing to answer fire and EMS calls.

REFERENCES

# Sources

1. Firefighters Association of the State of New York (FASNY) / Resolution Economics, "Economic Study of the Tax Savings Generated by New York's Volunteer Fire Service," 2023.
2. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), U.S. Fire Department Profile; via NFPA Journal / Firefighter Close Calls reporting, 2024-2026.
3. National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC), Volunteer Fire Service Fact Sheet, 2024.
4. CBS News New York, "Historic volunteer firefighter shortage drops Long Island to crisis levels," Jan. 2026 (Floral Park Centre closure; Mineola fire).
5. News 12 Long Island, "Nassau County officials ask for volunteers as fire department is forced to close," Jan. 2026 (Nassau volunteer counts).
6. Long Island Press, "New York faces alarming firefighter shortage as volunteer ranks dwindle statewide," July 2025 (71 Nassau departments).
7. NYS Assembly (Conrad) / FASNY: New York volunteers 110,000 (1998) to 75,000 (2021), -32%; calls +29% over the same period.
8. NYS Association of Fire Districts; WGRZ; NEWS10 (six 2025 closures; 40-year low), 2026.
9. Roslyn Fire District records (local call-volume and Roslyn Highlands membership figures).