



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

VPFF: Organizing and Collective Bargaining Update

May 28, 2025

Federal Legislation

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- Public Safety Officer Free Speech Act (H.R. 1443/S. 1247)
 - Protects the right to speak publicly about job-related issues
 - Consistent with many current GOP priorities
- Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act (H.R. 1505/S. 636)
 - New Federal Mandate
 - Requires states to protect basic collective bargaining rights
 - Firmly bipartisan



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Local/State Collective Bargaining Update

Collective Bargaining at the State/Local Level

Due to the current inability to pass collective bargaining at the federal level, the IAFF under GP Kelly has moved to focus more at the state and Local level.

The focus is primarily on the southern states.

- From the time that the IAFF delegates at the 1994 IAFF Convention in Detroit, Michigan passed a resolution making national collective bargaining the IAFF's top legislative priority and it was reaffirmed at the 2016 IAFF Convention. It is a mandate that remains in force to this day. The legislative efforts to obtain national collective bargaining have endured a long-tortured history since 1994, but a national collective bargaining bill remains the top priority of the IAFF.



Collective Bargaining is...

- Is a process by which employers and employees sit down and discuss the terms and conditions of employment. These discussions lead to a collective bargaining agreement that outlines wages, hours, and working conditions.
- This process creates a structured environment for employers and employees to discuss workplace issues and terms and conditions of employment through collaboration and mutual respect.



Winning Collective Bargaining Rights

- Winning bargaining rights means Education!
- Who do we educate?
- Beware of FEAR!!

• **“Fear is a Liar”**



Intake Evaluation for Locals Seeking Collective Bargaining

When a local calls the IAFF to seek assistance in obtaining collective bargaining rights, we evaluate the following:

- 1) Local Politics (CB favorable to mayor, council, fire chief, city manager).
- 2) Type of Government (Strong Mayor, Strong Council, Fire District, etc.).
- 3) Local involved in Local community? (schools, fundraisers, central labor council)
- 4) Knowledge of Legislative Process
- 5) Local PAC
- 6) Legal Representation
- 7) **Local make up, dues structure and Member density (You must have a high membership density).**



Collective Bargaining Overview

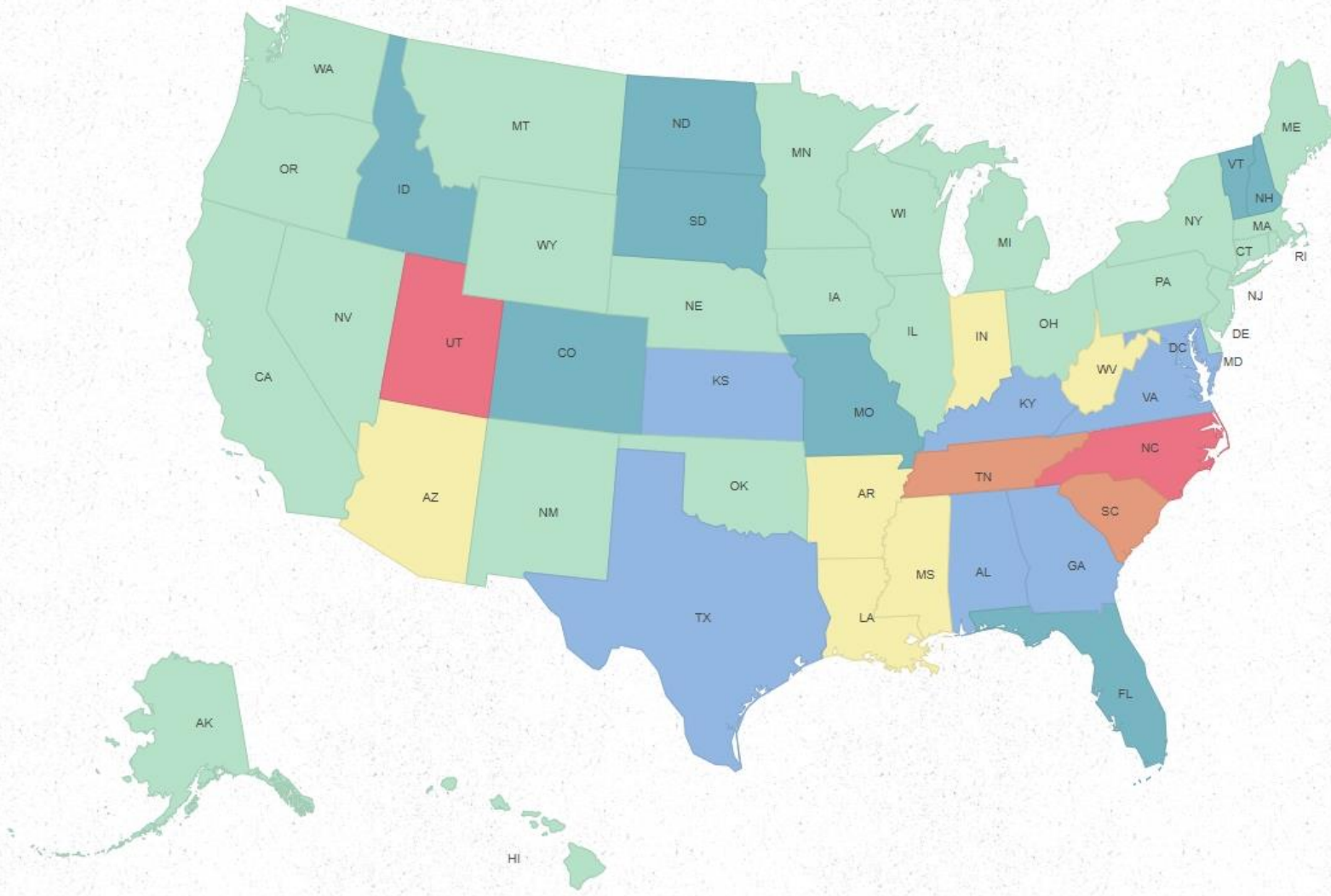
- Even with the advances in the public sector collective bargaining since the 1950's, many states and localities still don't provide bargaining rights to fire fighters, and some vehemently oppose it (primarily in the south and some western states).
- There are 18 states that do not have guaranteed bargaining rights at the state level for fire fighters.
- Some of those 18 states do permit bargaining at the local level.

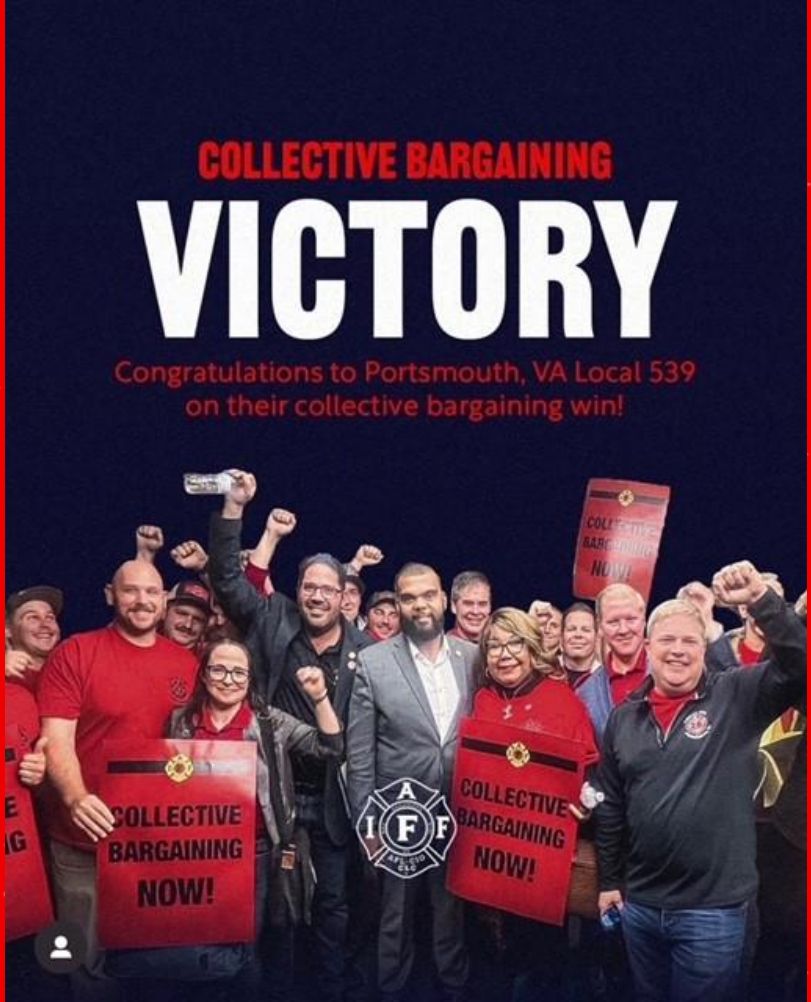


Collective Bargaining Overview

- 23 states allow collective bargaining with binding arbitration.
- 8 states allow collective bargaining, but non-binding arbitration or fact-finding.
- 6 states allow bargaining on the local option by state statute (Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Texas, and Virginia).
- 11 states allow local option without state statute. (Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Indiana, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota, West Virginia). South Carolina and Tennessee are silent on laws but have court cases making collective bargaining unenforceable.
- 2 States it is Illegal (North Carolina and Utah).







Utah

- Legislature passed HB 267 which outlawed collective bargaining in Utah.
- Labor groups this month submitted 320,000 signatures calling for a vote to repeal.
- Groups that oppose the ballot measure can lobby voters to remove their names from the list. Some of those groups have conceded and are raising money to run an opposition campaign.



Georgia

- In the early 1970's then Governor Jimmy Carter signed the right for fire fighters to collective bargaining under Georgia Code Title 25-5-4.
- This is just for fire fighters in the state, in municipalities over 20,000.
- **Current Agreements or MOU's:** East Point, South Fulton, Athens-Clarke County, Atlanta.
- **Atlanta's first CBA was recently ratified by members and city government.**
- **Current Targets:** Savannah, and Augusta, Cobb County, and Dekalb County.
 - Savannah has had agreements in the past, but the city has never adopted Title 25 to enforce the contract.



Texas

- Municipality can pass an ordinance for Meet and Confer.
- To gain bargaining rights you must go through a referendum.
- Recent Victories: Leander, Hutto, Irving, and Wichita Falls.



Virginia

- Va. Code 40.1-57.2: Passed in 1993 and was in effect until May 1, 2021, prohibited municipalities from entering into agreements with labor union or employee associations.
- **HB 582/SB 939:** Permits collective bargaining by municipalities if they have adopted an ordinance permitting collective bargaining.



Virginia

- **Locals with agreements:** Alexandria, Arlington County, Charlottesville, Fairfax County, Prince William County, Loudoun County, Richmond.
- **Locals with ordinances supporting but not passed yet:** Portsmouth.
- **Current Targets:** Virginia Beach, James City County Part of York County, Newport News, and Roanoke.



Kentucky

- Only Lexington and Louisville are guaranteed bargaining rights in state statute. Others must opt in under home rule.
- **Recent Victories:** Shepherdsville.
- **Current Targets :** Owensboro, Jefferson County and other Chapter 75 Fire Districts, Nicholasville, and Frankfort.
- IAFF Legal is researching the capability of Fire Districts to enter into CBA's.
- In light of that we still need to focus on electing and getting Mayors/Judge Executives to get pro union/pro labor people to the board.





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**ORGANIZING
DEPARTMENT**

—

**INTERNAL
AND
EXTERNAL**



NEW LOCALS IN APRIL

**PLEASANT VALLEY-DUTCHESS
CAREER FIREFIGHTERS**

LOCAL 4282, NEW YORK

**JERSEY VILLAGE PROFESSIONAL
FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION**

LOCAL 5538, TEXAS

**HILLSBORO PROFESSIONAL FIRE
FIIGHTERS ASSOCIATION**

LOCAL 4604, TEXAS

**HOWELL AREA PROFESSIONAL
FIREFIGHTERS UNION**

LOCAL 5546, MICHIGAN

**HOLMES COUNTY PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY
MEDICAL PERSONNEL**

LOCAL 5545, FLORIDA

LEONARDO FIRE RESCUE

LOCAL 1-108, PENNSYLVANIA

**HARKER HEIGHTS PROFESSIONAL
FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION**

LOCAL 5548, TEXAS

**FORT LUPTON PROFESSIONAL
FIRE FIGHTERS**

LOCAL 5553, COLORADO

**TOLLAND COUNTY
FIRE/EMS
DISPATCHERS**

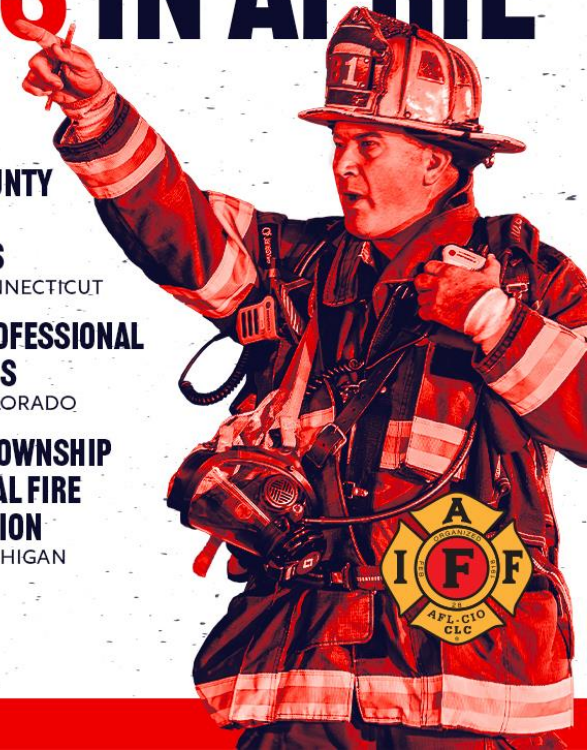
LOCAL 3841, CONNECTICUT

**DURANGO PROFESSIONAL
FIRE FIGHTERS**

LOCAL 5554, COLORADO

**VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP
PROFESSIONAL FIRE
FIIGHTERS UNION**

LOCAL 5550, MICHIGAN



INDUSTRY DENSITY IN UNITED STATES*

*Sources: IAFF Membership Data, USFA National Fire Department Registry (currently no identical data source in Canada), and US BLS

IAFF

Mar. 2024 **77.1%**

May 2025 **79.6%**

+2.5%

Other Unions

UAW **20%**

All Public
Sector (2024) **32.2%**

U.S. Labor Movement

Jan. 2024 **10%**

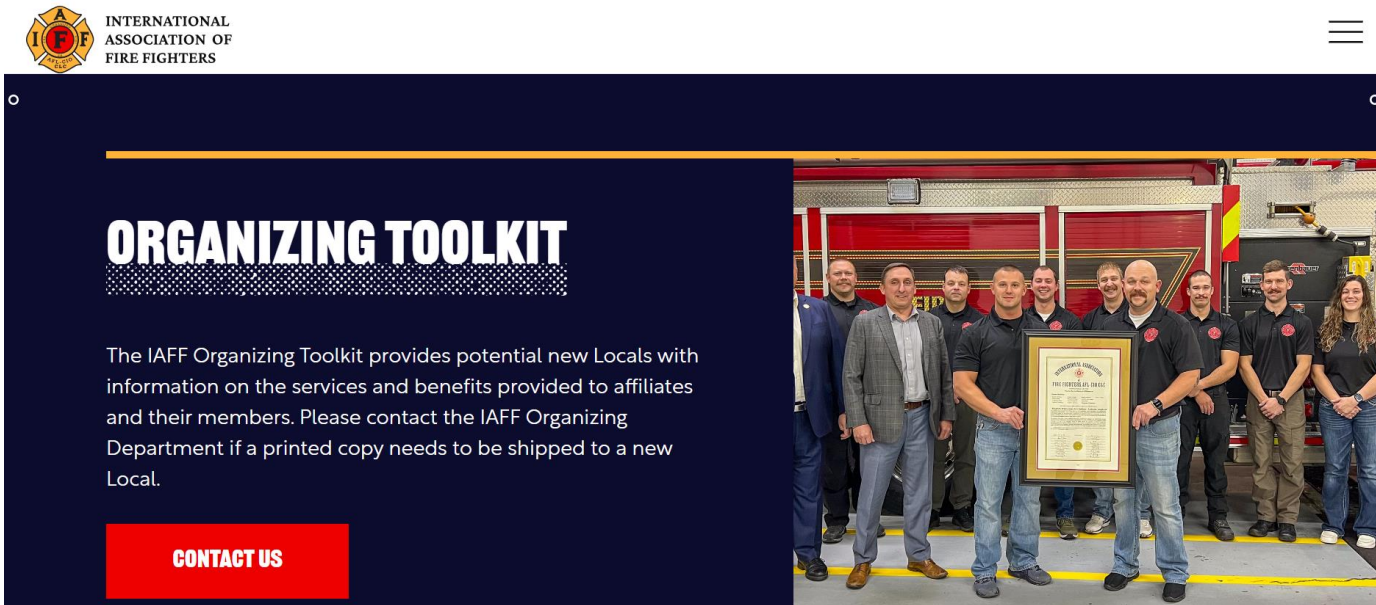
Jan. 2025 **9.9%**

-0.1%



New Organizing Resources and Tools

- **NEW** Organizing Toolkit Website Page



IAFF New Member Folders



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HOW TO REQUEST

NEW MEMBER FOLDERS FOR NEW RECRUIT CLASS IAFF PRESENTATIONS

Do you need new member folders for signing up union members at New Recruit Class IAFF Presentations? **REQUEST THEM FROM THE IAFF ORGANIZING DEPARTMENT!** All we ask is to send us a copy of the group photo taken at the New Recruit Class for us to share.

1. Local president must email join@iaff.org requesting New Member Folders (copy your IAFF District Vice President). Include the following information:
 - Local name/number
 - Number of New Member Folders needed
 - Shipping address (no PO boxes)
 - Requested delivery date (please provide more than 7 calendar days, if possible)
2. Send us a copy of the group photo taken at the New Recruit Class to join@iaff.org for us to share. Make sure to include:
 - Copy of photo
 - Local name/number
 - Brief description of the group photo (e.g., 10 new recruits joined IAFF Local 9999)

WHAT'S INSIDE A NEW MEMBER FOLDER:

- IAFF Brochure (summarizes IAFF programs and services)
- IAFF Financial Corporation Flyer
- IAFF Peer Support Training Flyer
- IAFF Hazmat Training Brochure
- IAFF Burn Fund Brochure
- FIREPAC Flyer
- IAFF Membership Card
- IAFF Decal Sticker



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New Recruit IAFF Orientation – Template PowerPoint

 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

New Recruit IAFF Orientation



International Association of Fire Fighters

- Founded on February 28, 1918
- 354,812 Members & 3,549 Locals (3/1/2025)
- 112,888 New Members since 2000 (+47%)
- **Important Resources:**
 - Government Affairs & Political Action
 - Communications
 - Legal Services
 - Hazmat Training & Grant Administration
 - Health, Safety & Medicine
 - Collective Bargaining/Financial Analysis
 - GIS/EMS Analysis
 - Center of Excellence (BH Treatment)
 - Burn Fund

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Recent Major IAFF Victories

Social Security Fairness Act: \$233 billion in retirement benefits restored for our members.

AFG/SAFER Grants Reauthorization: \$700 million annual funding to fire departments.

Push for Collective Bargaining Rights in Southern States: Local collective bargaining ordinances and first ever CBAs in Georgia, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, etc.

Recent Major State Victories

[Insert State Win] Example: Statewide Firefighter Cancer Bill.

[Insert State Win]

[Insert State Win]



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What is a Union?



- Family
- Voice



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HOW TO RECEIVE YOUR CERTIFICATE FOR BEING A 100% UNION FIREHOUSE

1. The Local president must first verify that all employees represented by the union in the firehouse are active IAFF members.
2. Next, the Local president emails membership@iaff.org (cc your DVP), requesting a 100% Union Firehouse Certificate with the following information:
 - Local Name
 - Local Number
 - Mailing Address (we are unable to deliver packaged cardstock certificates to a PO Box)
3. Once you receive the 100% Union Firehouse Certificate, send group pictures with the certificate to join@iaff.org to share.



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100% Union Firehouse Certificates



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IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



Name: _____ Years of Experience as FF/EMS: _____
Job Classification: _____ Hourly Rate of Pay: _____
Department: _____ Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____

STAFFING

Is the department staffed with enough fire fighters and/or emergency medical personnel?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No. If no, please explain:

TRAINING

Does the department properly train its staff to respond to calls for service?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No. If no, please explain:

SAFETY

Do fire fighters and/or emergency medical personnel feel safe when responding to calls for service?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No. If no, please explain:

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IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



IAFF BARGAINING SURVEY



YOUR ISSUES

Please rank the following issues, 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important.

- ☐ Wages
- ☐ Health Insurance
- ☐ Retirement
- ☐ Staffing
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Seniority
- ☐ Differentials & Certification Pay
- ☐ Scheduling
- ☐ Other (Please Explain): _____

Are you and your coworkers ready to **take action** to fix these issues?

- ☐ Yes, I'm committed to taking action to improve my department. ☐ No, I'm okay with the current issues at my department.

Do you know any fire fighters and/or emergency medical workers at non-union departments?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "Yes," please list the name, phone number, and email address of the department.



Learn more about
JOINING THE IAFF!

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Request an IAFF Flag



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HOW TO REQUEST AN IAFF FLAG FOR ORGANIZING GROUP PHOTOS

Do you need an **IAFF Flag** for a group photo during an organizing campaign, to celebrate an organizing victory, or for an important New Recruit Class? Request one from the IAFF Organizing Department! All we ask is to send us a copy of the group photo for us to share.

1. Local president must email join@iaff.org requesting an **IAFF Flag** (copy your IAFF District Vice President) and include:
 - Local name/number
 - Shipping address (no PO boxes)
 - Requested delivery date (please provide more than 7 calendar days, if possible)
 - Brief description of purpose (e.g., organized new fire department, signed up new union members at new recruit class)
2. Send us a copy of the group photo with the IAFF Flag to join@iaff.org for us to share. Include:
 - Copy of group photo
 - Local name/number
 - Brief description of the group photo (e.g., newly organized fire department joins Local 9999)
3. Ship the IAFF Flag back to IAFF Headquarters (we include a return shipping label with the flag for you to use).



SEND US GROUP PICS!



Dekalb County Professional Firefighters ...

· Follow

May 1 · 🌐

Please join us in welcoming 19 new members to Local 1492! These members will be graduating the fire academy soon and joining the ranks of y... See more



👍❤️ Nick Bentley + 92

9 comments 4 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment 🔗 Copy ➦ Share



Waterbury Fire Fighters Association, ...

IAFF Local 1339 · Follow

3d · 🌐

Local 1339 is proud to welcome 100% of Recruit Class 25-17 to the [International Association of Fire Fighters](#). All 24 members signed their car... See more



👍❤️ 411

55 comments 17 shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment 🔗 Copy ➦ Share



Salt Lake City Fire Fighters IAFF Local 81 ...

· Follow

Nov 20, 2024 · 🌐

Meet the newest members of IAFF Local 81! 100% of SLCFD Class 54 chose to become Union Firefighters, and we're proud of the hard work they've... See more



👍❤️ Joshua Nelson + 132

9 comments 1 share

👍 Like 💬 Comment 🔗 Copy ➦ Share



IAFF Local 4724 · Follow

Apr 9 · 🌐

Local 4724 wants to give a great big welcome to our 5 new members: Donal, Corbin, Mallory, Ethan, and Ian!... See more



👍❤️ 47

1 comment 7 shares



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

CONTRIBUTE TO **FIREPAC** TODAY



You are just steps
away to helping your
IAFF advocate for
you and your family.





THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?



Chris "Blue" Bartley

Political Program Coordinator
| cbartley@iaff.org