

MONTANA FIRE TRUSTEES ASSOCIATION

Strategic Plan



Adopted March 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For any organization to reach its full potential, it must have a plan; a plan that sets goals with realistic timelines and critical tasks that need to be accomplished to reach the goals. The MFTA Strategic Plan is a working document that will allow constant, real-time updates as goals are accomplished and as new objectives are added. It has been developed by the Board of Trustees and staff of MFTA. It is updated annually by the MFTA Board and staff with input from members of the MFTA.

INTRODUCTION

The Montana Fire Trustees Association (MFTA) was organized in 1990's to serve trustees of fire districts/fire service areas throughout Montana. In the 2000's, membership was expanded to include trustees of fire service areas.

MFTA has an aggressive legislative program that is coordinated with fire service organizations across the state. Each legislative session MFTA introduces, supports, opposes and/or follows legislation either needed by fire districts/fire service areas or which may impact them.

For many years, MFTA sponsors an annual conference that provides training and other programs designed to improve fire district/fire service area governance. MFTA sponsors webinars on subjects of current interest.

The MFTA office maintains a library of information and resources helpful to fire districts/fire service areas and trustees on its web site. MFTA also gives trustees the opportunity to work with other trustees and share challenges, concerns, and successes.

MISSION

Montana Fire Trustees Association Mission Statement

“To Montana Fire Trustees Association serves Fire Trustees by providing leadership through involvement; professional development through education, networking, legislation and information distribution; and a forum to improve the fire districts and fire service areas of Montana.”

VISION

Montana Fire Trustees Association Vision

The Montana Fire District Trustees Association will be:

- A forward-thinking organization that speaks with a unified voice for all trustees.
- An organization that reaches out and helps the fire and emergency service community.
- A trusted and respected source of information for the fire service.
- Recognized for providing quality communications to its members.
- Dedicated to serving the needs of all fire districts/fire service areas.
- An organization in which trustees proudly belong and participate.
- An influential force on state policy and legislative issues.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1 – Membership. Strategically increase membership in the Association.

Objective 1-A: Target recruiting of new members in all counties of Montana

Timelines: On-going

Responsibility: MFTA Membership Committee

Critical Tasks:

- Continually update the recruiting/reasons to join brochure
- Develop a membership challenge program
- Publish a list of member Districts/Fire Service Areas and Non-members and provide at the annual conference

Objective 1-B: Develop and implement strategies to attract new members, renew past members and improve awareness of the Association's programs and services

Timelines: Third scheduled meeting each year

Responsibility: Board of Directors and staff

Critical Tasks:

- Develop and maintain a list of all fire districts/fire service areas in Montana indicating MFTA membership status (current member, former member, non-member).
- Review results of the membership and awareness campaign and revise future efforts on a quarterly basis.
- Prepare materials promoting MFTA services and programs.
- Develop talking points and identify current or former Board members to be responsible for outreach with member and non-member districts in various regions throughout the

state.

- Explore other opportunities to improve awareness of Association programs and services, including articles for the MFTA web site and newsletter.

Objective 1-C: Develop and implement a new trustees bootcamp to provide new trustees with the knowledge, skills and abilities to be a functional and productive board member.

Timelines: Fourth quarter of 2026

Responsibility: Board of Directors and staff

Critical Tasks:

- Research and develop the new trustees bootcamp with an agenda, topics and speakers.

Goal 2 – Deliver quality services and programs that contribute to the success of the Association’s membership.

Objective 2-A: Conduct a survey to determine the type and scope of services desired of the Association by its membership (in conjunction with Objective 2-B).

Timelines: Annually at the Montana Fire Service Conference

Responsibility: MFTA Conference Committee

Critical Tasks:

- Draft a member survey.
- Distribute, collect, and collate the survey results.
- Report the results of the survey at the first scheduled MFTA Board meeting after the conference.

Objective 2-B: Survey members and non-members to determine the types of issues they face for which the Association can provide education, support, and other programs or services (in conjunction with Objective 2-A).

Timelines: Annually at Montana Fire Service Conference

Responsibility: MFTA Conference Committee

Critical Tasks:

- Draft a member/nonmember survey.
- Distribute, collect, and collate the survey results.
- Report the results of the survey at the first scheduled MFTA Board meeting after the conference.

Objective 2-C: Develop and present training programs and workshops identified in the member survey at various locations within the state and at the Annual Conference (in conjunction with Objective 2-B).

Timelines: Annually

Responsibility: Executive Committee and MFTA Conference Committee

Critical Tasks:

- Review the survey results to determine what training is desired and where it should be presented.
- Develop training presentations and materials addressing the survey results.
- Establish a delivery schedule.

Objective 2-D: Develop and deliver programs to assist fire districts/fire service areas with volunteer recruitment, retention, and compensation.

Timelines: Ongoing

Responsibility: Executive Committee

Critical Tasks:

- Review the Length of Service Awards Program (LOSAP). Report the results of the review to the Board not later than the January 2027 Board meeting
- Continue participation with the Montana Fire Chief's Association. Update the Board on the activities of the Fire Alliance; use the MFTA website to provide updates for MFTA members.
- Coordinate with the Montana Volunteer Firefighters Association Board to explore any opportunities for appropriate collaborative projects addressing recruitment, retention, and compensation.

Goal 3 – Provide highly effective communications between the Association, its members, and other related organizations.

Objective 3-A: Inform fire district/fire service area trustees of potential legislative action, financial and operational impacts that may result, and remedies to limit financial losses and operational consequences.

Timelines: Ongoing

Responsibility: Board

Critical Tasks:

- Provide information to the public safety community about pending legislation or regulatory action via email, postings on the MFTA website, or other means.
- When legislation may have negative consequence to a district, provide additional information on the consequence and suggestions for legislator contact

- Provide a synopsis of session results at its conclusion along with positive and negative consequences of successful legislation.

Objective 3-B: Establish a newsletter in written and electronic format, providing current news and information on issues appropriate to public safety.

Timelines: Ongoing

Responsibility: Staff/Board

Critical Tasks:

- Provide information to the public safety community about pending state or federal legislation or regulatory action.
- Solicit articles from public safety partners, agencies, and organizations to include in the publication.
- Review publication and distribution costs.

Objective 3-C: Maintain a current and user-friendly web site.

Timelines: Daily

Responsibility: Staff/Board

Critical Tasks:

- Provide useful links to national, state, and local resources.
- Provide up-to-date information regarding MFTA and the public safety community.
- Provide current information on legislative and administrative issues.

Objective 3-D: Increase collaboration with other organizations to accomplish mutually identified goals.

Timelines: Ongoing

Responsibility: Executive Committee

Critical Tasks:

- When possible, attend meetings of organizations such as Montana State Fire Chiefs Association, Montana Volunteer Firefighters Association, Montana Fire Wardens Association, Montana State Fire Marshal, and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Fire Protection Bureau, report on MFTA activities, and respond to questions or requests for collaborative activities or projects.
- When possible, attend conferences of similar organizations and participate as appropriate.
- At each MFTA Board meeting, present a report of committee activities and any recommendations for collaborative activities or projects.

Goal 4 – Develop an effective organization capable of delivering the services desired by its membership

Objective 4-A: Develop and implement a plan for the MFTA Board to provide a more diverse approach to Board representation and service delivery.

Timelines: Third scheduled meeting each year

Responsibility: Board of Directors and staff

Critical Tasks:

- Identify options to improve diverse representation and service delivery.
- Identify required changes to current policies.
- Identify resources needed to implement options.
- Develop a draft plan for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

Objective 4-B: Maintain a comprehensive, forward looking, strategic plan

Timelines: Annually

Responsibility: Executive Committee, Board Members, and Staff.

Critical Tasks:

- Provide a strategic plan progress report at each Board meeting.
- Complete an update of the strategic plan no later than the second MFTA Board meeting each year.
- Present a strategic plan progress report annually at the Montana Fire Service Conference.

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

The Montana Fire Trustees Association selected the following Performance Objectives to help measure the results of its efforts.

- At least 40% of all Montana rural fire districts/fire service areas will be members of MFTA.
In 2026, approximately 10 percent of fire districts/fire service areas were members of MFTA.
- At least 25% of all Montana rural fire districts/fire service areas will be represented at the annual conference.
In 2025, approximately 2 percent of fire districts/fire service areas were represented at the Montana Fire Service Conference.

- At least 90% of all members surveyed at the Annual Conference will rate the Association's services as "very good" or better.
In 2026, X % of members surveyed at the Annual Conference rated the Association's services as "very good" or better (XX%, 'very good'; XX% 'excellent').
- Coordinate a minimum of five training opportunities for the membership per year, including the annual conference.