

IAFF Juvenile Fire Setting Project Update

May 6, 2013

The IAFF Charitable Foundation-Burn Fund has been awarded two DHS Fire Prevention and Safety Grants to look into the problem of data collection in relation to juvenile fire setting. It is widely recognized that the present data collection system, primarily through the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) has some significant gaps that limit the ability to develop evidence-based solutions. In response to this, various local and state organizations have taken it upon themselves to develop their own data collection systems. While these may very well address their own needs, unfortunately it does not help the larger JFS community because the information resides locally and not in a larger database from which it would be possible to identify trends, common factors, etc.

Advisory Committee

This project, which is being led by Phil Tammaro, the IAFF 3rd District Burn Coordinator, is very collaborative in nature and has brought together a wide variety of various local and national organizations and experts in the field of JFS to begin developing the framework and possible solutions to this data gap. It is being guided by an Advisory Committee made up of:

- Marty Ahrens, NFPA Fire Analysis Services
- Jim Crawford, Vision 20/20
- Karen Deppa, National Association of State Fire Marshals
- Justin Dillard, ImageTrend
- Sanjay Kalasa, Firehouse Software
- Martin King, West Allis (Wisconsin) Fire Department
- Karla Klas, University of Michigan Trauma Burn Center
- Mary Marchone, National Fire Academy
- Brad Pabody, National Fire Data Center
- Gerri Penney, Palm Beach County Fire Rescue
- Don Porth, President SOS FIRES
- Alan Purdue, Guilford County Emergency Services
- Paul Schwartzman, Finger Lakes Regional Burn Association
- Brent Smith, Cedar Rapids Iowa Fire Department
- Phil Tammaro, IAFF Charitable Foundation- Burn Fund
- Richard Taylor, Maine Fire Marshal's Office

In addition to the Advisory Committee, a group of stakeholders met in 2012 at a national summit and will be meeting again shortly in 2013 to review the project and the direction that it is moving. This is key to the success of the project, getting support and buy-in from this diversity of organization.

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Project Components

The IAFF Charitable Foundation-Burn Fund project to develop the framework for the future development of a national youth fire setting database has identified three major components that are needed for a successful national JFS data base:

- A Two Tier System for data collection.
- Data Dictionary
- Centralized Data Repository

Two-tier data collection system

- Tier 1- Information currently available in NFIRS regarding the incident (if there was a fire department response) to better understand the youth fire setting issue and it's relationship to the national fire problem. This would be relatively routine information such as date, time, location, etc.
- Tier 2- For professionals affiliated with youth fire setting intervention programs who have met the necessary qualifications established

Data Dictionary For the data collection process to work, it is important that consistent information be captured that allows for analysis and comparison across jurisdictions and demographics. The proposed Data Dictionary includes data elements that the subject matter experts (SMEs) involved in this project felt are necessary and could serve as the minimum data set for the forthcoming Youth Fire Setting Data Dictionary . The proposed Data Dictionary does not limit the amount of data that can be collected-this is only the minimum that is needed.

Centralized Data Repository A comprehensive nationwide search on existing JFS databases was conducted that included representation from all 50 States and well-established regional JFS programs. All data was recorded into a central resource document to ensure proper documentation of the search, to identify potential pilot centers, and to provide summary data for grant outcome reporting. This precursory research will lead to the identification of a small subset of databases on which to perform more detailed analysis. While there were a number that were very comprehensive, none were found that were the ideal solution to the problem of centralized data collection. In addition, a priority is streamlining the amount of data entry that must be done on the street level, making sure that there is no duplication of effort with entries being made into NFIRS.

Since the changes being considered for JFS data entry would require modifications to NFIRS that are beyond its present capabilities, it is thought that a hybrid model of JFS data entry that both draws and feeds data into NFIRS is a possible solution.

Advisory Committee Meetings

At a meeting on April 3, 2013, the project's Advisory Committee gathered for a day-long meeting to review the progress of the project and to determine the steps forward. A presentation on the JFS database survey showed that none of them met our specific needs, but this survey provided invaluable information as to what should go into an ideal data collection tool. In addition, the proposed data elements that would go into a Data Dictionary were also reviewed and finalized by the committee. A plan for moving forward was then discussed and agreed upon.

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Steps forward

There are two major Steps Forward that will be undertaken in the coming months.

- Beta testing the data dictionary
- National Summit

Beta testing the Data Dictionary This will be for the development of an online data collection tool using the questions from the dictionary. The objective will be to “test drive” the questions and see if they are the right questions to be asking for the information we are looking for.

Action Steps

The following action steps were identified as part of the pilot testing

- Create entry tool
- Develop standard reports
- Develop testing protocols
- Develop evaluation tool
- Develop training
- Identify pilot sites
- Conduct training for pilot sites
- Rollout
- Follow-up
- Data analysis

National Summit On June 26 and 27, the IAFF will be hosting a National Summit Meeting in Clearwater Beach, Florida, to bring stakeholders up to speed on what has been accomplished to date and the preliminary results of the Data Dictionary pilot test effort. This meeting will bring together a broad coalition of organizations and experts in the field of JFS to review the progress and make recommendations.

Interim Report An interim report on the results of the first phase of this project is being finalized and will be available shortly.