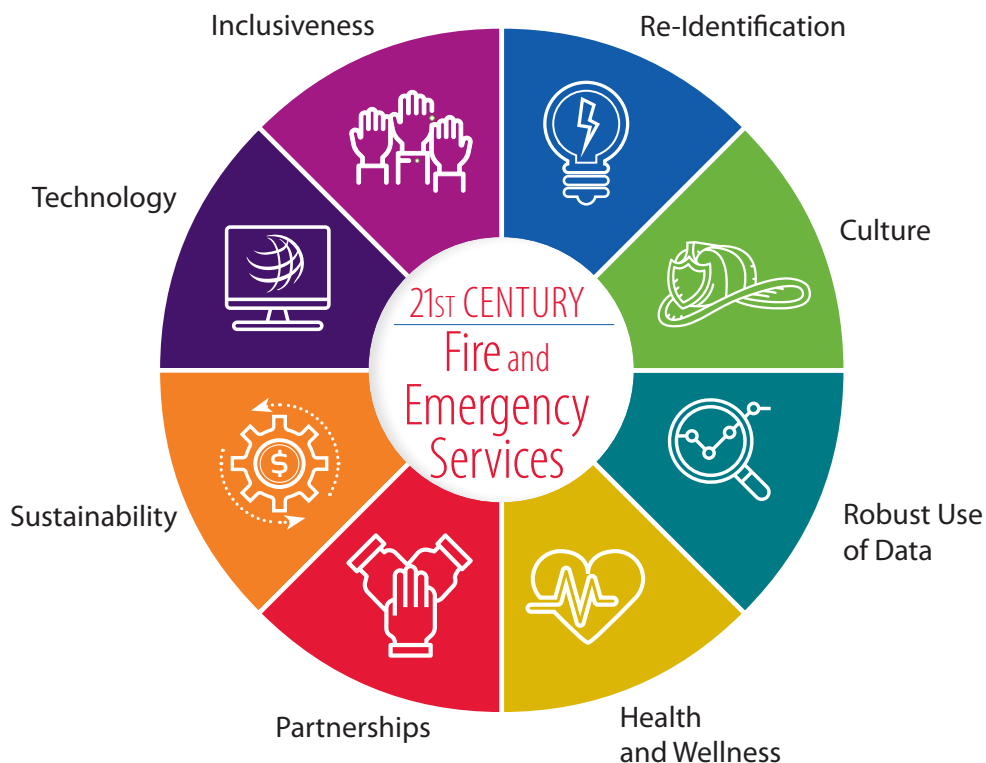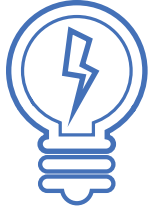# Fire and Emergency Services

Summary

As local government have begun addressing such issues as climate change, affordable housing, homelessness, immigration, the opioid epidemic, and behavioral health, many fire and emergency services have become the health and safety net for communities. The 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services White Paper outlines eight emerging issues that will have either positive or negative impacts on local government and the fire and emergency services depending on how they are handled now and in the future. While there are challenges, the next 30 years hold great potential to refine and improve how services are provided at the local level.

ICMA
Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

CPSE
Center for Public Safety Excellence

CRITICAL ISSUE A:

RE-IDENTIFICATION

Initiative 1: Celebrate the heritage of the fire and emergency services while recognizing that services provided have evolved and will continue to experience significant changes over the next 30 years.

CRITICAL ISSUE B:

CULTURE

Initiative 1: Enhance alignment between community, elected officials, management, labor/volunteer representatives, and overall workforce.

Initiative 2: Promote an organizational environment that is adaptable, open to change, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement.

Initiative 3: Establish organizational expectations for employee education, credentialing, and continued professional development.

CRITICAL ISSUE C:

ROBUST USE OF DATA

Initiative 1: Utilize quality data for evidence-based decision making to assess and produce the best outcomes.

Initiative 2: Implement advanced data analytics to make informed decisions.

Initiative 3: Develop comprehensive records management systems (RMS) to collect and analyze data effectively.

Initiative 4: Focus on developing outcome-based data for all measurable operations and functions within the organization.

CRITICAL ISSUE D:
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Initiative 1: Champion research on the health impacts specific to the fire and emergency services to evaluate the health risk of consecutive hours worked, sleep disruption, and the impacts on employee health..

Initiative 2: Proactively address the increased mental health challenge(s) facing the fire and emergency services.

Initiative 3: Adopt and support fitness and wellness best practices throughout the whole organization and incorporate this philosophy in every aspect of operations.

Initiative 4: Ensure ongoing physical fitness and wellness requirements are standardized, adopted, and used within every department.

Initiative 5: Continue research toward the development of comprehensive decontamination procedures for the fire and emergency services.

Initiative 6: Urge personal protective equipment (PPE) manufacturers to develop new PPE and bio-metric censors to ensure effectiveness, reduce equipment weight, and provide for the enhanced ability to monitor the physiologic health and stress markers for personnel during response to an incident.
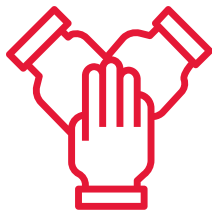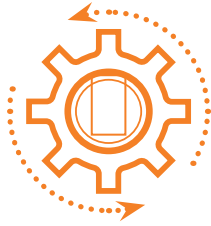
CRITICAL ISSUE E:
PARTNERSHIPS

Initiative 1: Acknowledge the need to work with a wide range of partners to serve the community and develop local strategies to create new approaches to providing services more effectively.

Initiative 2: Promote a symbiotic relationship with other internal departments and outside agencies that are routinely allied responders to an incident.

Initiative 3: Continue to expand community emergency response capabilities.

CRITICAL ISSUE F:
SUSTAINABILITY

Initiative 1: Address aging fire and emergency services vehicles and building structures.

Initiative 2: Reconsider and revamp current deployment methods.

Initiative 3: Develop sustainable pension model.

Initiative 4: Adopt and implement a community risk reduction strategy

Initiative 5: Improve resource allocation by focusing on the outcomes trying to be achieved.

Initiative 6: Examine fixed costs associated with current delivery models and associated contracts.

Initiative 7: Explore public/private partnership opportunities.

Initiative 8: Research strategies to assist communities in sustaining their volunteer fire and emergency services or, if needed, how to transition to a new model.

Initiative 9: Dramatically revamp the fire and emergency services education and training model to provide the needed skill sets, knowledge, and abilities required for the anticipated changes in the future and to remain current with the application of emerging technologies.

CRITICAL ISSUE G:
TECHNOLOGY

Initiative 1: Adapt to and leverage rapidly evolving technology to improve service delivery.

Initiative 2: Develop a change mindset to help anticipate and support appropriate use of emerging technology and encourage the development of new technologies.
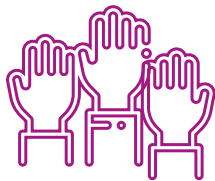
CRITICAL ISSUE H:
INCLUSIVENESS

Initiative 1: Make it an organizational priority to recruit, select, and promote members who reflect the demographic makeup of the community they serve.

Initiative 2: Understand the community characteristics, culture, and diversity that exist and determine the most appropriate way to serve and interact with all community members.