

Thanks to your support and legislative passage in 2021, the Hometown Heroes Assistance Program is the most comprehensive firefighter well-being legislation in the nation.

The Hometown Heroes Assistance Program (HHAP) dedicates \$4 million per year to ensure that every Minnesota firefighter has access to the education, prevention and care needed to handle a cardiac, emotional trauma or cancer diagnosis.

Now, we need your help once again to ensure the program is running as smoothly as possible. Please PASS HF 2746 (Youakim)/SF 2634 (Howe).

The HHAP is a landmark piece of firefighter well-being legislation overwhelmingly supported by a bi-partisan legislature in 2021. Since implementation, it's clear that two small procedural changes are needed to ensure effective administration of the program:

SF 2634 outlines those changes:

1. Clarifies that the HHAP applies to diagnosis on or after the effective date of the bill, August 1, 2021. This ensures the funding remains sustainable for its intended duration.
2. Changes the flow of funds from the Office of Justice Programs to the State Fire Marshal, which was the intended agency to oversee the funds all along.
3. Other minor language clean-up

Thank you for your continued support of our hometown heroes as we fine-tune this critical program!



More than 12% of all firefighters will develop heart disease at some point in their lives.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS

92% of firefighters view seeking mental health treatment as a sign of weakness.

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS

More than 68% of all firefighters will develop some form of cancer in their lifetimes.

NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

The Hometown Heroes Assistance Program

A brief history



Members of Minnesota’s fire service protect the health and safety of millions of citizens, yet are themselves affected by serious health concerns including cardiac disease, emotional trauma and cancer at rates nearly twice as high as the general public.

Since 2016, the [Minnesota Firefighter Initiative](#) (MnFIRE) has been focused on improving the health crisis in our fire service. Historically, the nonprofit organization worked to bring awareness to the issue by offering free health and wellness training available to every fire department in the state.

However, a lack of public awareness and attention to firefighters’ health concerns meant that while fire departments did what they could with limited resources, fire service members continued to suffer. 2020 was one of the deadliest years in modern memory for Minnesota firefighters, including multiple suicides of active firefighters, numerous deaths from cancer and two Line of Duty Deaths from cardiac issues. More needed to be done to prioritize the health of Minnesota’s firefighters.

The Hometown Heroes Assistance Program represents a critical part of the solution. The program, which Minnesota legislators passed in 2021, dedicates \$4 million per year to ensure that every Minnesota firefighter will have access to the education, prevention and care needed to handle a cardiac, emotional trauma or cancer diagnosis.

This is the most comprehensive firefighter well-being legislation in the nation, combining three vital resources that are currently available to all active volunteer, paid-on-call, part-time and full-time Minnesota firefighters for free:

- MnFIRE Assistance Program with expanded emotional trauma resources
- Up-to-\$20,000 critical illness insurance policy
- Ongoing health and wellness training