

# The Volunteer Department Retention Value Calculator: **User Guide**

The Volunteer Department Retention Value Calculator requires a simple set of data:

- Total number of volunteers that serve the community.
- Total volunteer hours yearly from all members: include time responding to calls, performing station duties, meetings, community relations events (parades, school visits), fire prevention activities, inspections, completing a training program like Firefighter 1 or EMT, and anything else your department does for the community.
- State: Pick your state to use a volunteer rate per hour that represents your state. The calculator automatically applies the rate - you don't need to find it. Alternatively, you may also use the US national average.

The output graph will show the retention value the community receives from all fire/EMS department volunteers for the current year.

## The Volunteer Department Retention Value Calculator: Use Examples

Somewhere Volunteer EMS has 12 active members who donate an average of 8 hours per week per volunteering, which is 4992 total annual hours. Like many volunteer organizations, the calls for service are creeping upward while attracting and keeping volunteers is getting harder. A town council member wants to know the retention value of all members so she can highlight the value Somewhere Volunteer EMS members give and support its bonus program.

Somewhere Volunteer EMS has found that giving each volunteer a bonus of \$1000 annually reduces turnover by retaining its members for 2 years longer than if no bonus was given. Retaining trained and experienced volunteers for more years means Somewhere Volunteer EMS can staff the second ambulance more frequently when the primary ambulance is already committed to an incident. Somewhere Volunteer EMS also spends \$4000 annually on advertising to attract new volunteers. The town council member supports these budget items. Seeing the retention value for all members this year will help her advocate for funding the bonus program and the advertising.

## Calculator Inputs

**Step 1:** Total number of department members: 12

**Step 2:** Total number of volunteer hours provided by all members yearly: 4992

**Step 3:** Select the US average volunteer rate or your state rate for more detailed results. In this example, Texas.

**Step 4:** Press Calculate

**Step 5:** This output is in a different format from the previous calculator. Right-click to save or copy for later use. Calculator result: The retention value of all 12 members of Somewhere Volunteer EMS this year is \$159,444, or \$13,287 per member.

### ANNUAL VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS

**\$159,444**

### AVERAGE ANNUAL VALUE PER MEMBER

**\$13,287**

Results created using the estimated hourly value of \$31.94 for Texas  
Source: [Independent Sector](#). Last Updated: April 23, 2024