

Subject: Rescue Consolidation: Response Times, Impacted Neighborhoods, Jurisdictional Cost-Sharing
Related Department: FIR

**FY 2027 Proposed Budget
 Budget Work Session Follow-up**

4/10/2026

The following information is provided in response to a request made by Ms. Cunningham received by email on April 3, 2026, regarding the following question:

What response time impacts? What neighborhoods are most likely to be impacted? Alexandria and Fairfax have recently eliminated rescue units - if we maintain or restore the unit, could we share the cost with surrounding jurisdictions?

Response Times and Neighborhood Impacts: In the rescue consolidation plan, moving rescues from Stations 2 and 9 to Station 1 does impact response time slightly. For four neighborhoods, a four-minute response is no longer likely (Dominion Hills, Shirlington, Tara-Leeway Heights, and Waycroft-Woodlawn), but only Tara-Leeway Heights no longer meets the 8-minute response time standard. Conversely, the move to Station 1 improves response time to under four minutes for Columbia Heights, Lyon Park, and Penrose who were previously in the under 8-minute standard. For comparison, there are 18 neighborhoods that do not have four- or eight-minute response times under either rescue plan.

Number of Arlington Neighborhoods	Under Four-Minutes	Exceeds Four-Minutes
2 Rescue Companies	11	52
1 Rescue Company	10	53
Number of Arlington Neighborhoods	Under Eight-Minutes	Exceeds Eight-Minutes
2 Rescue Companies	42	21
1 Rescue Company	40	23

To ensure community safety and response time standards, ACFD has an engine at all fire stations, transport units in eight of the nine stations, and three additional truck or tower companies in three stations. Those units are typically the first responders for the majority of emergency incidents. Additionally, the consolidation plan adds a peak daytime transport unit, which will improve response time for medical emergencies. A heavy rescue unit is added to an emergency call in specific low frequency incident types that require specialized equipment and/or materials.

Jurisdictional Cost-Sharing: Since 1975, Arlington County has been a part of the Northern Virginia Emergency Services Mutual Response Agreement. This agreement

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ensures a system of automatic mutual response regardless of boundaries and stipulates that no party shall be indebted to another for any “usual and customary emergency services”. While this does not mean that Arlington cannot enter into a cost sharing agreement for something specific, it is likely not appealing to our neighboring jurisdictions with our existing mutual aid practices. Both Alexandria and Fairfax have similar budget pressures with Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department proposing nearly a million-dollar budget reduction and Alexandria reducing costs in all areas except personnel. All fire departments in the National Capital Region monitor automatic aid flows between jurisdictions. Arlington consistently receives more automatic aid than provided to neighboring jurisdictions mostly on the west end of Columbia Pike and primarily for medical calls.