



# Fighting Fire With Funding: Newsletter Article Examples

Local fire districts can publish these articles in their newsletters to directly inform their communities about the funding crisis and provide clear calls to action, such as contacting legislators. Community organizations like Chambers of Commerce can also share their dedicated article in their own newsletters to activate their networks, demonstrating broad community support for increased fire service funding and amplifying the advocacy message.

## Article 1: For Local Fire District Newsletters

### **Headline: Protecting Our Future: Your Fire District Faces a Critical Funding Shortfall – And It Impacts All of California!**

As your dedicated fire service professionals, we're bringing an urgent issue to your attention: California's local fire agencies, including your own, face a critical funding crisis jeopardizing public safety statewide.

For 50 years, demands on fire districts have dramatically increased. Our roles have expanded beyond fire suppression to include sophisticated emergency medical services (EMS), hazardous materials incidents, technical rescues, and extensive wildfire mitigation. These responsibilities require continuous training, advanced equipment, and adequate staffing.

**Understanding Our Funding Challenge:** It's vital to understand how local fire districts operate and are funded, especially compared to state agencies like CalFire. While CalFire is a state agency primarily focused on wildland fire protection in State Responsibility Areas, your local fire district provides all-risk emergency services directly to your community every day. Our primary funding comes heavily from property taxes and service fees. Unfortunately, these funding mechanisms have not kept pace; our property tax allocations have remained stagnant since the 1970s. This gap leads to challenging choices, including potential brownouts, increased response times, and deferred investments in vital equipment and infrastructure.

**Why Local Matters to the State (and CalFire):** This isn't just about our local district; it impacts the entire state. Your fire district is crucial to California's statewide mutual aid system. While CalFire is instrumental in fighting large wildfires, they rely heavily on resources from local fire agencies. During recent fires, over 60% of personnel came from local agencies. Forty-two percent of fire engines deployed on the line come from local government agencies, underscoring our vital role in statewide wildfire response. When local agencies are underfunded, it strains this system, putting more communities at risk. In 2020, California saw nearly 20,000 "Unable to Fill" calls for additional fire resources, highlighting a breakdown in local operational capacity.



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We need your help. We are respectfully requesting our state legislators, including the Governor, to develop long-term, collaborative solutions that prioritize secure and sufficient funding for local fire services.

### What Can You Do?

- **Call Your Legislators:** Urge your State Assemblymember, State Senator, and the Governor's office to support sustainable funding for local fire agencies.
- **Share This Information:** Talk to friends and family about this critical issue.
- **Stay Informed:** Follow our updates and support our advocacy efforts.

Together, we can ensure our fire district remains fully equipped and staffed to protect our community and contribute to a safer California for all.

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## Article 2: For Local Organization Newsletters

### Headline: Community Safety is Good Business: Supporting Our Local Fire Agencies is Key to California's Resilience

As leaders in [Your City/Town], we understand that a thriving economy and quality of life rely on robust public safety. Our local fire protection districts and departments are central to this foundation, but they now face an urgent and significant challenge: a severe funding shortfall.

California's fire agencies serve over 39 million people. Over five decades, their responsibilities have expanded exponentially. They are the first responders for emergency medical services (EMS)—now the majority of calls—hazardous materials incidents, and are on the front lines of California's escalating wildfire crisis. This expanded scope means higher costs for essential training, specialized equipment, and adequate staffing.

**Understanding Local Fire Agency Funding and Its Impact:** It's crucial to distinguish local fire agency funding from CalFire, a state-funded agency focused on wildland fires. Your local fire department primarily relies on local funding mechanisms, predominantly property taxes and service fees. Despite increased demands and rising operational costs, these funding mechanisms have remained largely stagnant since the 1970s. This creates a dangerous gap, leaving departments struggling to maintain staffing, upgrade equipment, and invest in infrastructure. The direct impact: potentially longer response times, units temporarily taken out of service ("brownouts"), and a strained mutual aid system.



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## Article 2: For Local Organization Newsletters (...continued)

**The Indispensable Role of Local Fire Agencies:** This funding crisis isn't just a "fire department problem"; it's a community problem. Delays in emergency response can have devastating consequences for individuals and significant economic impacts. Local fire agencies are absolutely vital to the state's entire emergency response, including supporting CalFire. When CalFire needs additional resources for large incidents, they heavily depend on manpower and engines from local fire districts. Local agencies provide over 60% of personnel during major fires. This reliance means that underfunded local agencies lead to critical "Unable to Fill" (UTF) requests for mutual aid, impacting statewide capacity.

It's time to advocate for those who protect us. We need our state legislators to prioritize sustainable funding for local fire services. Investing in local fire districts is an investment in our collective safety and economic resilience.

### What can [Organization Name] members and the community do?

- **Contact Your Legislators:** Urge your State Assemblymember, State Senator, and the Governor's office Contact Your Legislators: Urge your State Assemblymember, State Senator, and the Governor's office to address the fire service funding shortfall.
- **Spread the Word:** Share this vital information within your networks.
- **Support Local Efforts:** Engage with your local fire district.

Our local fire agencies are essential partners in building a safe, prosperous community. Let's stand with them to ensure they have the resources they need.