

Resolution No. 42

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT: Policy

Re: International Membership Opportunities

1 WHEREAS, the International Association of Fire
2 Fighters was founded in 1918 by representatives of
3 66 fire departments across the United States and
4 Canada seeking to provide our brother and sister fire
5 fighters a voice in their working conditions, wages,
6 training, living conditions, and health and safety; and

7 WHEREAS, the IAFF has now grown to
8 encompass over 3,500 locals representing over
9 345,000 fire fighters and emergency medical
10 workers; and

11 WHEREAS, the members of the IAFF rely on the
12 expertise of almost 200 employees across the United
13 States and Canada to carry on the union's work in
14 technical assistance, health, safety and medicine,
15 education and training, government and political
16 affairs, and many other areas; and

17 WHEREAS, around the world today, fire fighters
18 and emergency medical workers stand at the ready
19 regardless of the hazard and regardless of where the
20 calls comes from or from who, the fire service shows
21 up; and

22 WHEREAS, we know our job is dangerous, but
23 this does not mean we accept all risks or that we
24 cannot work for the health and safety of our
25 members; and

26 WHEREAS, in 2007, the IAFF joined labor

27 unions from Australia, the United Kingdom, and
28 New Zealand to form the Global Alliance; and

29 WHEREAS, this Global Alliance continues to
30 grow, and in 2023, leaders from Australia, Denmark,
31 Finland, Germany, Iceland, Sweden, and New
32 Zealand traveled to New York and attended the IAFF
33 John A. Redmond Health and Safety Symposium;
34 and

35 WHEREAS, these discussions reinforced these
36 issues to be global in nature and requiring a shared
37 vision and effort to address the many concerns of
38 fire fighter health, safety, behavior health, and
39 operational guidelines; and

40 WHEREAS, the dangers and hazards fire fighters
41 face have changed considerably over the last few
42 decades, fires burn hotter and faster with more
43 synthetic fuels, building construction practices lead
44 to less mass and quicker collapse times, and new
45 technologies create an ever-changing fire dynamic
46 and technical rescue challenges; and

47 WHEREAS, climate change is making wildfires
48 and other weather events more extreme, more
49 frequent, and more deadly; and

50 WHEREAS, the IAFF participated in a workshop
51 in Greece, which experienced its hottest winter on
52 record, on training and changing dynamics; and

53 WHEREAS, the IAFF has been a leading force in
54 developing new technologies, strategies, and training
55 to improve fire fighter safety and competency in
56 combatting the Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI), the
57 IAFF Responding to the Interface training program

58 provides effective and consistent training to
59 structurally trained fire fighters responding to WUI
60 fires, and the Canadian and U.S. Governments have
61 recognized this industry-leading training and
62 invested grant monies to local departments to host
63 the IAFF RTI training; and

64 WHEREAS, as new technologies, such as lithium
65 ion batteries, have come to the marketplace and
66 created a new hazard for citizens and the responding
67 fire fighters, who must bring the event to a
68 successful conclusion, the IAFF partnered with the
69 U.S. Department of Energy and UL Fire Fighter
70 Safety Research Institute to conduct research based
71 on energy storage systems installed in residential
72 properties, the IAFF has committed to sharing this
73 information with our members and the global fire
74 fighter community; and

75 WHEREAS, the IAFF has engaged with
76 international partners, like the Singapore Civil
77 Defense Force, to share research efforts and lessons
78 learned to increase the knowledge of the conditions
79 of battery failure and the development of training
80 materials; and

81 WHEREAS, during the COVID pandemic, the
82 IAFF worked with representatives of the
83 International Red Cross Committee to establish an
84 international working group to identify best practices
85 for responding to COVID patients, and our
86 partnership has continued with the Israeli Fire
87 Fighters Union and the Israeli national EMS agency
88 to analyze major, mass-casualty incidents in each

89 nation; and

90 WHEREAS, in 2021, personnel from the Israeli
91 Home Front Command assisted IAFF members in
92 Florida to conduct search and rescue operations
93 Following a major condominium collapse, and in
94 2024, members of IAFF Local 1510, Fire Fighters of
95 Miami Beach, traveled to Israel to assist Israeli fire
96 fighters in maintaining staffing levels following a
97 devastating terrorist attack; and

98 WHEREAS, occupational cancer is now the
99 number one killer of fire fighters in the U.S. and
100 Canada and is responsible for almost 75% of fire
101 fighters placed on the IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter
102 Memorial in Colorado Springs; and

103 WHEREAS, understanding the need to further
104 study the link between cancer and job-related
105 exposure to contaminants, the General President has
106 appointed a Chief Medical Officer, a Chief Science
107 Advisor, and established the Science and Research
108 Department; and

109 WHEREAS, two years ago, the delegates
110 assembled at the 56th IAFF Convention adopted
111 Resolution 19 – Cancer Research Committee, to
112 create a cancer research fund, and recognized our
113 responsibility to share our knowledge with the global
114 fire service to help protect our fellow brothers and
115 sisters; and

116 WHEREAS, cancer is not the only disease killing
117 IAFF members as our members continue to be at
118 greater risk of developing and dying from
119 cardiovascular disease as it remains the leading cause

120 of on-duty deaths in the fire service; and

121 WHEREAS, in response to the trauma and stress
122 our members are exposed to daily, the increased
123 levels of PTSD, versus the general public, diagnosed
124 in the fire service, the IAFF has developed industry-
125 leading peer support and resiliency training programs
126 and established a substance abuse recovery center for
127 IAFF members; and

128 WHEREAS, we have identified PFAS exposure
129 hazards within our protective gear, joined with the
130 Metropolitan Fire Chiefs to issue a position paper to
131 warn of these dangers, and have partnered with
132 several allies in environmental working groups and
133 all levels of government in the United States and
134 Canada to rid the fire service of this cancer-causing
135 element; and

136 WHEREAS, we owe it to our fallen members and
137 to future generations to make our job safer, and this
138 obligation extends to our fellow fire fighters
139 internationally who answer the call for assistance in
140 their respective nations; and

141 WHEREAS, the IAFF is uniquely positioned, not
142 only as a labor leader but also as a leader in fire
143 fighter research advocacy and educational
144 development, and as an international advocate, and a
145 collaborator for fire fighter safety; and

146 WHEREAS, an IAFF, with a broader global
147 membership and international partners, can be an
148 agent of change and impact on fire fighter health and
149 safety worldwide; therefore be it

150 RESOLVED, That the delegates assembled

151 empower the IAFF Executive Board to investigate
152 the possibilities of developing pathways, or
153 opportunities, for the IAFF to develop levels of
154 membership for international fire fighters,
155 paramedics, and rescue workers; and be it further
156 RESOLVED, That the IAFF Executive Board will
157 focus these potential memberships for access to the
158 IAFF, stakeholders, research reports, educational
159 materials, training services, health and wellness
160 programs, and other potential services; and be it
161 further
162 RESOLVED, That the IAFF Executive Board
163 identifies these levels of membership and may
164 proceed with an initial trial period before the
165 membership reconvenes at the 58th IAFF Convention.

Submitted by: IAFF Executive Board

Cost Estimate: **None**

Annual or Perpetual Designation: **N/A**

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Adopt

CONVENTION ACTION: Adopted