



# DC FIRE & EMS Foundation

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**Testimony in Support of the  
FY 25 Proposed Budget for the  
DC Fire & EMS Department  
Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety**

Good afternoon, Chairperson Pinto, members of the Council, and Council staff. My name is Amy Mauro. I am Executive Director of the DC Fire & EMS Foundation and a life-long resident of the District of Columbia. I am pleased to testify today in support of Mayor Muriel Bowser's FY 25 budget for the DC Fire & EMS Department.

The mission of the Foundation is to support the DC Fire & EMS Department and its heroic members by supporting their training, wellness and recognition, equipment and facilities, and by educating the community about the Department's life-saving mission. Our vision is to empower the Department to continue to be a national leader in the fields of EMS, fire suppression and prevention, homeland security, and technical rescue. You can read more about the Foundation on our website at [dcfireemsfoundation.org](http://dcfireemsfoundation.org).

The residents of and visitors to the District are very fortunate to have a Mayor and Council who are as committed as they are to fully funding the life-saving services of this critical agency. I have worked in public safety in the District for over 25 years, including almost eight years as Chief of Staff of the fire department. In the past, the Department was not always appropriately funded, and that reality had life and death consequences.

In 2015, the Department was under-resourced. It ran out of ambulances on a daily basis, its apparatus broke down routinely, its members received little training, and the District's cardiac arrest survival rate was half the national average. Thanks to budget investment and brave policy decisions by the Mayor and Council since then, the Department has stayed on its apparatus replacement schedule, its members receive regular training, and its innovative programs like the Nurse Triage Line and whole blood initiatives are leading the way nationally.

Most importantly, the District's cardiac arrest survival rate has increased to above the national average, in some years doubling the number of survivors. Attachment A is a chart that demonstrates this amazing progress, with 2023 showing a record level of cardiac arrest survival in the District. On the Foundation's website, there is a page called Meet Our

Patients & Their Life Savers. Without the Department's progress, half of those cardiac arrest survivors would not be alive today.

I remind our residents and policy makers of the past because it is both a cautionary tale and a powerful lesson. The lesson is that investing in the DC Fire & EMS Department saves lives.

Mayor Bowser's FY 25 budget and financial plan, which increases the Department's operating budget by 12.6%, maintains this important investment and progress. I say this while being well aware of the financial challenges currently faced by the city, and of the sacrifices that need to be made in other areas of the District's budget as a result. But the reality is that no matter how the local economy ebbs and flows, when our DC neighbors and visitors call 911 for a fire or EMS emergency, they expect our firefighters and EMS personnel to respond quickly, compassionately, and competently. This budget proposal allows them to continue to do so and I urge the Council to approve it without any reductions.

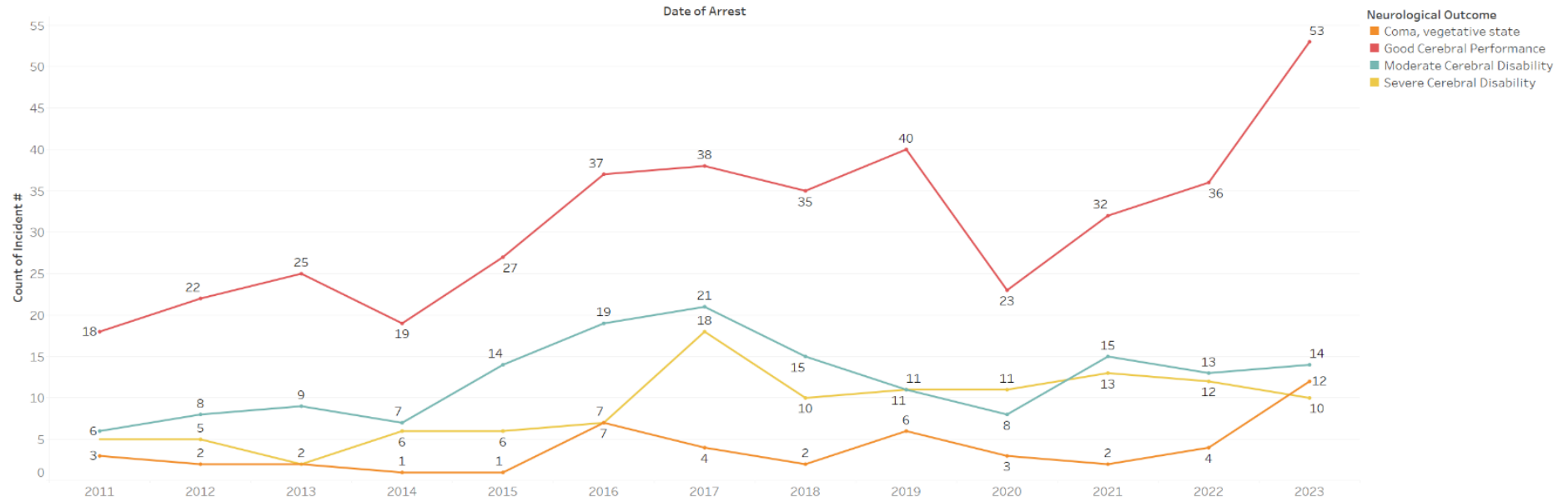
One priority of the Foundation is continuing to work toward building a new Training Academy campus for the Department that meets the modern needs of the agency. The Department has been able to make the progress I have summarized with a patchwork of old buildings and limited classroom space, including a falling apart and uninspiring lower building built in 1961 with three classrooms, an upper building built in 2003 as a temporary building that has only four classrooms, and two trailers that have supplemented instructor office space for decades. The Department has also retrofitted PR Harris, an old school building, to meet the needs of the Denise M. Beales Immersive Lab and Education Center for EMS and leadership training.

Again, we are fortunate that our Department does not have the level of recruitment challenges that fire departments are experiencing nationally. In recent months we have had 145 recruits in the academy at one time. Aspiring first responders still want to become DC's Bravest. They deserve a learning environment worthy of the incredibly challenging and honorable work that they undertake on a daily basis. The FY 25 capital budget includes \$4.75 million to continue the planning and design of a joint Training Academy modernization project with the Metropolitan Police Department. I urge the Council to not only approve that funding but to prioritize keeping this project on track in the out years and as additional capital funds become available.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today and I look forward to any questions you may have.

## Attachment A

Survival by Neuro Status and Year



The trend of count of Incident # for Date of Arrest Year. Color shows details about Neurological Outcome. The view is filtered on Neurological Outcome, which keeps Coma, vegetative state, Good Cerebral Performance, Moderate Cerebral Disability and Severe Cerebral Disability.

Source: Office of the Medical Director, DC Fire & EMS Foundation

