

ALLEN COUNTY FIRE & EMS DISTRICT (ACFD)

Executive Summary — Progress Update

Prepared for the Allen County Commissioners, County Council, & Oversight Committee

-April thru June 2026

Overview

Over the past ~2 months, the Allen County Fire & EMS District continues to move from concept to a functioning, unified organization. All county districts/territory have committed to unification into a single district, including the commitment to integration of southeast Allen County; Monroeville, Jackson, Monroe, and Madison Townships.

This summary provides commissioners, council members, and oversight members with a high-level view of the progress achieved to date across governance, finance, leadership, operations, EMS, logistics, and public communications, along with the immediate next steps. The work reflects a deliberate transition focused on building a sustainable countywide fire and EMS system.

Key Milestones Accomplished

Organizational Formation

- Leaders have formalized bi-weekly meetings that bring together [district and territory leaders, one county commissioner, and one council member](#) to review and discuss ongoing unification progress.
- Procedurally (Effective Jan. 1st, 2027) dissolved the prior separate county entities. All entities have voted and signed letters of intent.
- Integrated southeast Allen County, including Monroeville and Jackson, Monroe, and Madison Townships. All entities have voted and signed letters of intent to join ACFD.
- Commissioners to vote within 30 days to established a single, unified Allen County Fire & EMS District. Commissioners vote will include the legal name change. Associated DEA and state paperwork will follow; the formation resolution has been provided to the oversight board.
- Trustee Board appointments (Commissioners & Council) have predetermined timelines per newly adopted [IC 36-8-11-12.1](#)
- Developed and finalized all job descriptions and a framework for command/organizational chart.
- Completing department audits and aligning standard operating procedures across the district.
- [CFAI Accreditation](#) — The following accreditation represents the long-term goals of our organization and serves as a roadmap for the future we are working to build through strategic planning, collaboration, and continuous improvement

Financial Foundation

- Engaged two budget-preparedness consultants, a current city clerk and a former City of Fort Wayne controller, to support budget development and presentation. Support payroll alignment, financial reporting, and transition coordination
- Retained [Baker Tilly](#) to perform the financial analysis and maximum levy modeling for the unified district, with findings projected for mid-June.
- Approved the fiscal consultant contract and purchased payroll software.

Leadership & Command Structure

- Established a defined, deliberate process for filling command positions, built around a formal leadership assessment paired with a structured interview that gives each candidate the opportunity to speak to their own experience and history.
- Distributed leadership assessments to all command personnel as part of this process.
- The district remains committed to placing the right people in the right roles through an objective, consistent selection process.

Systems, Accountability & Change Management

- Implemented a task management system to track every item requiring completion across all divisions.
- Adopted a structured change management system to govern all current and future organizational changes.
- Updated the district's adaptive framework to align with new goals and initiatives. (Located on Allencountyfire.org)

Operations, EMS & Logistics

- Evaluated stations for occupancy and living quarters, including Monroeville and Hoagland.
- Secured hospital med-channel support letters and advanced EMS protocol development.
- Began capital planning and fleet/apparatus evaluation, including a 10-year capital improvement plan.
- Initiated a comprehensive review of resources, equipment, and facilities across the district.

Medical Director Appointments

- Confirmation of appointments (1 Lead Medical Director, 4 Deputy Medical Directors) Assigned by quadrants (Candidates participated in a formal interview process conducted by EMS professionals.)
- Role in countywide EMS clinical oversight and protocol direction
- Provision of ongoing training and medical guidance to EMS personnel
- Integration with district/territory EMS operations

Public Communications

- Launched a district website and [social media presence](#) providing real-time public updates, consistent with the district's adaptive framework.
- Began a six-month public information and social media campaign.
- Town hall meetings will be set within the next 6-8 weeks. Goal is to meet with each quadrant of Allen County

Command Positions Filled

The following executive and chief officer positions have been filled through the district's leadership selection process: [Chiefs](#) participated in a detailed leadership and personality assessment and an interview process that included civilians, elected officials, and district representatives.

Position	Officer
Executive Fire & EMS Chief	Jeremy Bush
Deputy Chief	Robert Boren
Chief of EMS & Personnel Development	Doug Call
Chief of Logistics & Emergency Resources	Gale Stelzer
Chief of Prevention & Public Education	Don Patnoude
Chief of Operations & Deployment	Jeff Berning

Key Risks Evaluated & Recognized

The district’s planning is grounded in a clear assessment of the risks facing Fire & EMS service in Allen County. The most significant risks identified and actively managed include:

- **Firefighter safety and staffing** — maintaining safe staffing levels across a 550-square-mile area, where extended response intervals and insufficient staffing levels increase risk to responders and the public.
- **Citizen Safety** — In some areas of Allen County, response times have significantly exceeded nationally recognized benchmarks, and these delays can contribute to diminished patient outcomes in time-sensitive emergencies.
- **Declining volunteer availability** — shrinking volunteer ranks against rising call volume threaten coverage, particularly in southeast Allen County.
- **EMS capacity strain** — growing EMS demand competes with safe fire-suppression staffing; the Civilian Paramedic Program is the primary mitigation.
- **Fiscal and funding risk** — reliable & consistent emergency response coverage and long-term sustainability depends on factors partly outside district control, including state legislation, Allen County Council tax allocation, and assessed-value growth.
- **Operational interoperability** — variation in training and communications across districts creates risk during major incidents.
- **Legal and compliance** — standardizing policies, reporting, and asset/debt assignment across districts to meet state, [OSHA](#), and [NFPA](#) standards.

Next Steps

- Complete the leadership assessment and interview process for remaining civilian & command positions (Assistant Chief and below).
- Finalize the unified district budget with Baker Tilly findings and the budget-preparedness consultants, incorporating maximum levy modeling.
- Continue fiscal integration- payroll/HR alignment and standardized financial reporting across all districts and territories.
- Advance EMS protocol alignment and evaluate the civilian paramedic program for countywide deployment.
- Complete apparatus, equipment, and facility inventories and finalize the 10-year capital improvement plan.
- Continue public engagement through the website, social media, and community outreach.
- Next Oversight Update — September 2026