

**The National League of Cities  
City Showcase Application  
Fire Station No. 14  
Fayetteville, North Carolina**

Program description

The City of Fayetteville is building a new fire station unlike any other station in North Carolina. When Fire Station No. 14 is completed in October 2005, it will serve as a residence for Fayetteville State University interns who will attend classes and receive hands-on training from firefighters as part of FSU's new fire science curriculum. The station is the result of a collaborative effort between the city and Fayetteville State University, one of the oldest predominately black universities in North Carolina. The \$3.4 million fire station, which will be located adjacent to Fayetteville State University, fulfills several of the city's needs.

Fayetteville has a population of 130,762 and ranks as the sixth largest municipality in North Carolina. Because of its large, diversified population, the city faces many unique challenges, especially within its fire department. One crucial challenge for the fire department is building enough fire stations to adequately provide service to the ever-growing city. The fire department's other challenge is recruiting and maintaining minority firefighters. Minorities and women make up about 11 percent of the city's firefighters. Yet, according to the 2000 U.S. Census – the most current census information available for Fayetteville – about 51 percent of the population is nonwhite.

In the late 1990s, the Human Relations Commission of Fayetteville-Cumberland County began hosting Study Circles seminars, during which city and county officials, residents, and community leaders could meet to discuss ways to improve the quality of life for all residents. During one particular seminar, Fire Chief Benny Nichols was serving as a facilitator when participants began discussing the need for a career-mentoring program for minority students through the school system. Chief Nichols took that suggestion and developed a proposal whereby FSU would develop a fire science curriculum and the city would build a fire station on the university's land. The proposal is now reality, and the fire department soon will have a station in a much-need area of the city and be able to effectively recruit and hire more minorities and women.