

A Letter to Our Western Coventry Residents

Dear Western Coventry Residents,

Recently, there has been a significant amount of information circulating on social media regarding staffing at the Western Coventry Fire District. Some of this information is incomplete or inaccurate. As your Board of Directors, we believe our residents deserve clear, accurate information about the staffing and emergency services provided by your Fire District.

Our Staffing Has Increased

The Western Coventry Fire District has made a deliberate commitment to increasing staffing.

In 2025, we increased our full-time staffing to five members. Later that year, one of our full-time firefighters was injured while responding to a fire. We remain committed to maintaining that position and supporting our employees until they are able to return.

Beginning with the April 2026 budget year, the Board increased full-time staffing again, bringing our total to six full-time members.

Our goal has been to provide Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) coverage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, whenever possible. That commitment has not changed.

A Team of Dedicated Professionals

Our six full-time members, along with 26 per-diem personnel work to ensure 24/7 coverage for our residents.

Our per-diem team brings tremendous experience and expertise to Western Coventry. It includes retired and off-duty firefighters from departments throughout Rhode Island, with personnel certified at the EMT, ACLS, and Paramedic levels.

Our team also includes former Fire Chiefs and other experienced emergency service professionals who choose to spend their free time serving the residents of Western Coventry. Some also serve as instructors at the Rhode Island Fire Academy, helping train firefighters from departments across the state.

Our staffing is not simply a number on a schedule. It is a team of experienced professionals who have chosen to dedicate their time, knowledge, and expertise to protecting our community.

BLS Is a Recognized Level of EMS Care

There has also been some confusion regarding Basic Life Support (BLS) coverage.

Rhode Island regulations recognize both Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) as regulated levels of emergency medical service. Under Rhode Island EMS regulations, a

Class A-2 ambulance may provide ALS with an appropriately licensed advanced EMS provider or BLS with an EMT.

BLS coverage therefore does not mean that Western Coventry is without an appropriate level of emergency medical service.

Our District has chosen to go beyond simply meeting the required level of service. We have made a commitment to provide ACLS coverage as much as possible, and our numbers demonstrate that commitment.

Our ACLS Coverage

Since March, Western Coventry has maintained ACLS coverage more than 90% of the time, and our current coverage rate is 98%.

When an ACLS provider is needed during a period when one is not physically in the station, we utilize mutual aid to bring the appropriate level of care to the incident.

Mutual aid is a normal and necessary part of the emergency response system. All fire and EMS departments rely on mutual aid at times. Even when Western Coventry is fully staffed, our crews may be unavailable because they are transporting a patient, responding to another emergency, or assisting a neighboring community.

In fact, last month alone, Western Coventry responded outside our district 29 times to assist surrounding communities.

We believe this demonstrates not only our commitment to Western Coventry, but also our commitment to being a good neighbor.

We Are Continuing to Build Our Team

We are not standing still.

Our plan is to continue recruiting qualified per-diem personnel while investing in the development of our existing providers. Several new ACLS-certified personnel are expected to join the department, and current BLS-level providers are being supported as they pursue ACLS certification.

The Facts Matter

The facts show that Western Coventry has been increasing its staffing and investing in the level of service provided to our residents.

In 2025, we increased full-time staffing to five.

In 2026, we increased it again to six.

We work with 26 per-diem professionals to maintain 24/7 coverage.

Our current ACLS coverage is 98.6%.
And we continue to recruit and train additional ACLS providers.

Fire and EMS agencies throughout Rhode Island and across the country are working to address staffing challenges. Western Coventry is actively addressing these challenges while continuing to provide trained and qualified emergency responders to our community.

Our Commitment to You

As your Board of Directors, we are committed to providing the best emergency services possible while being responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us by our residents.

We are also committed to providing accurate and transparent information.

We know that social media can spread information quickly. Unfortunately, incomplete information can spread just as quickly. Rather than relying on rumors or secondhand information, we encourage residents to come directly to us with questions.

We will continue to provide information and updates through wcfd.net.

Most importantly, we want our residents to know:

Western Coventry is staffed.

Western Coventry is responding.

Western Coventry is helping its neighbors.

And Western Coventry is continuing to invest in the future of emergency services in our community.

We are proud of the men and women who serve Western Coventry every day, and we are grateful for the continued support of our residents.

Sincerely,

The Western Coventry Fire District
Board of Directors