

**Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Section
Strategic Plan & Implementation Strategies
August 13, 2005
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Russ Sanders, Executive Secretary
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The membership of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Section of the IAFC & NFPA approved the strategic plan and implementation strategies below at its business meeting in Denver, Colorado on August 13, 2005.

Goal 1: Develop and implement a Strategic Plan.

Discussion: Metro Chiefs believes that a specific strategic plan outlining the vision of its future requires a specific set of clear goals and strategies. The Metro Chiefs' Strategic Plan outlines the foundation for actions necessary for Metro Chiefs to be an effective fire service influence on federal and state homeland security issues.

Strategies:

Strategies 1.1 – 1.2 have been accomplished.

1.1. Gather input from Metro Chiefs Executive Board, the IAFC Board of Directors, and NFPA. *The collective experience of the Metro Chiefs ensures that the plan includes perspectives from the broadest possible representation of these fire service partners.*

1.2. Obtain approval from Metro Chiefs Executive Board, the IAFC Board of Directors and NFPA senior leadership. *In order to implement the plan, it is critical that the leadership bodies adopt the plan as official Metro Chiefs policy.*

1.3. Publicize and disseminate the strategic plan widely within the fire service, in conjunction with the IAFC and NFPA. *The Metro Chiefs' strategic plan's goals and strategies involve the entire fire service. It is critical that all departments, regardless of size, be aware of what this plan is intended to accomplish.*

To accomplish this strategy, the Metro Board decided to communicate the Metro Chiefs Section strategic plan on the websites of the IAFC and the NFPA. Russ Sanders and Sacha Dick will be responsible for achieving this strategy. Further, as directed by the membership, in an effort to avoid conflicts and duplicated efforts, the document will be offered as a template to State Associations, Sections, Divisions and other fire service groups as deemed appropriate.

1.4. Utilize the strategic plan by adopting and implementing a regular planning cycle, assigning responsibility for oversight, and monitoring its progress. *A plan that is not referenced or implemented has little value to Metro Chiefs. This plan requires action and continued reference and updating.*

Progress reports on the Metro Chiefs Section strategic plan will coincide with regularly scheduled business meetings. The executive secretary and the chair of the Section will include “Strategic Plan Progress Reports” on the meeting agendas until such time that all goals and strategies have been accomplished. The Metro Chiefs representative to the IAFC Board will monitor and report on all strategies consistent with the IAFC strategic plan. The Metro Chiefs representative to the NFPA will monitor and report on all strategies consistent with the NFPA strategic plan. Metro Section members will be appointed to chair strategies specific to the Metro Chiefs Section and provide reports to the Chair on progress and completion.

- 1.5. Form coalitions with fire service interest groups to facilitate collaborative approaches to the achievement of the plan’s objectives.

Metro Chiefs cannot accomplish the goals of the adopted plan without support and awareness of other fire service interest groups.

The IAFC and NFPA have been consulted on the goals and strategies consistent with their respective strategic plans. Both organizations have agreed to include Metro representation on all goals and strategies common to the Metro Section strategic plan. A Metro Chiefs/UASI Coalition will be developed to address issues common to Metro Chiefs in cities receiving UASI funding to foster proactive decision making and, when possible, consistency in planning.

- 1.6. Develop a clear definition of the fire services’ role in homeland security using the strategic plan’s goals.

The plan’s implementation depends on a clear, concise, and agreed upon definition of the role the fire service should play in homeland security.

The Metro Executive Board feels accomplishing the goals and strategies of the Metro Section strategic plan will facilitate the achievement of this goal.

Goal 2: Gather, summarize, and use fire service input to gain Congressional support on fire service issues.

Discussion: Metro Chiefs recognizes that effective fire service policy is driven by political leadership that has a thorough understanding of the issues. Strong, data-driven information must be collected and updated on a regular basis and subsequently used to educate and engage legislators on fire service needs. Particular focus shall address the need for greater federal funding within existing legislative acts and the need to increase the visibility and role of the fire service within the Department of Homeland Security.

Strategies:

Strategies 2.1 - 2.3 are included in the IAFC strategic plan and will be supported by the Metro Section and monitored by the Metro representative to the IAFC.

- 2.1. Improve distribution of federal grants to the fire service.

Distribution of federal grants has not always been consistent, nor have some localities been able to access needed funding.

- 2.2. Solicit sustained congressional support of the Fire Act, increased funding for USAR, and the expansion of the SAFER Act in order to augment the available resources and staffing of the nation's fire service while pursuing needed new fire service-related programs and initiatives. *An understanding of the value and continued need for this federal funding is necessary to sustain political support. Further, as new funding begins to impact the fire service, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting its utility can help sustain or enhance political support.*
- 2.3. Monitor IAFC's efforts to gain congressional support for a Preparedness Directorate and provide additional support when feasible. *Effective influence within DHS may require Congressional intervention in the development and staffing of a Preparedness Directorate.*

The Metro Board has been engaged in recent IAFC initiatives in achieving this strategy since the Metro Chiefs Conference in San Antonio, TX and will continue our involvement until the strategy is completely fulfilled. The IAFC has been in constant communication with the Metro Section regarding this strategy. The Metro representative to the IAFC will be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress relative to this strategy to the Metro Section.

The Metro Board will partner with the IAFC (Government Relations Department) to accomplish strategies 2.4-2.6. Metro Section members will be assigned as support resources to the IAFC staff and the GRD. The Metro Chair will communicate with the IAFC Executive Director regarding Metro Section involvement in action plans to accomplish these strategies.

- 2.4. Develop a mechanism to solicit, analyze, and package fire service feedback for transmittal to members of Congress. *In order to have a complete package of critical data to influence Congress, mechanisms need to be formalized to ensure comprehensive collection and analysis.*
- 2.5. Compile a list of accomplishments as the result of the grant money received to date and indicate the fire service's continued needs for "All Hazards" protection. *This type of analysis is needed to effectively support strategies 2.2 and 2.3.*
- 2.6. Develop political strategies that include providing allies in Congress with specific and clear recommendations for the level of participation of the Fire Service in Homeland Security issues. *A coordinated, well-developed plan will facilitate the success of this plan.*

Goal 3: Design and implement a Congressional Networking Program for Metro Fire Chiefs in conjunction with the IAFC and NFPA.

Discussion: Metro Chiefs acknowledges that, in order to sustain long-term engagement with congressional leadership, it is important that its members have the necessary tools and information. This approach will lead to a clear understanding of the elements of a systematic and consistent approach to creating sustainable, long-term relationships and recognition.

Strategies:

Strategies 3.1 - 3.3 are included in the IAFC strategic plan and will be supported by the Metro Section and monitored by the Metro representative to the IAFC. Metro Section members will be assigned to support IAFC staff and the GRD.

- 3.1. Design and publish for fire chiefs a primer on interacting with and influencing members and staff of local congressional delegations.

Fire chiefs will benefit from a guidance document that will facilitate consistent, sustainable contact with legislators. Guidance may include how to establish ongoing contacts and relationships with members of Congress, congressional subcommittees and staff.

This Strategy has been accomplished. The IAFC has recently published, "How to Develop a Political Action Plan". The booklet is available on the website and should be an adequate solution to strategy 3.1.

- 3.2. Develop talking points, in collaboration with the IAFC and NFPA, for fire chiefs to use in discussions with congressional delegations and staff on the fire service's needs.

As members begin to meet with legislators, it is critical that they speak with one voice. This reinforces to Congress that Metro Chiefs, the IAFC, and NFPA are engaged and actively pursuing greater attention to common fire service needs. (See corresponding Goal 5.3.)

- 3.3. Identify political allies by creating and publishing a score card with collected voting records of Representatives and Senators on key fire service issues.

Metro Chiefs members need to understand the position of their respective legislators on key issues; and, legislators, in turn, need to know that their support for fire service issues is monitored and appreciated.

- 3.4. Pursue full participation of Metro Chiefs' membership in CFSI activities and identify other existing forums and events.

CFSI activities offer a consistent and well-recognized forum to meet key legislative supporters of fire service issues, both informally and formally. In addition, Metro Chiefs need to be visible at as many functions, forums, and events as possible. By identifying regularly scheduled events, members can plan ahead to ensure greater opportunities to influence key leaders.

The Metro Board shall actively encourage members to attend the CFSI 2006 beginning at the business meeting at FRI Denver, CO. Email reminders will be forwarded to all members October 2005, and January 2006. The Chair will communicate with the IAFC and the NFPA staff with regard to other congressional forums and events available.

- 3.5. Plan to host a Metro Chiefs Congressional function in conjunction with IAFC and NFPA.

In addition to existing forums sponsored by IAFC, NFPA, and others, it is important that congressional leadership is aware of the unique issues represented by fire chiefs from large fire service organizations. An ongoing presence of Metro Chiefs at these functions will inherently increase the potential for greater contact and influence.

- 3.6. Encourage congressional delegates to join and to support the Fire Caucus.

Legislators are involved in organizations that they know their constituents care about. This strategy will work toward creating a broader understanding of critical fire service needs.

The Metro Board will plan to achieve 3.5 and 3.6 at CFSI 2006. Fire Chiefs Tom Carr, Mary Beth Michos and William Goodwin have been assigned this project. Chief Carr will serve as the project champion. A request has been submitted to include this item for discussion at the Urban Fire Forum in September.

Goal 4: Insure placement of fire service representatives in the Department of Homeland Security and in meaningful advisory positions.

Discussion: Metro Chiefs believes that personnel with a background in the fire service are essential to an effective Department of Homeland Security. The expertise of individuals who have served on the front-lines of emergency operations at local and state levels offers DHS an unprecedented opportunity to incorporate this perspective in the creation, implementation, and operation of current and future programs and services. The long-term result will be the placement of representatives in key leadership positions, meaningful advisory positions, and relevant operational roles.

Strategies:

The Metro Board has been engaged in recent IAFC initiatives in achieving strategies 4.2 and 4.3 and will continue until the strategies are completely fulfilled. The IAFC has been in constant communication with the Metro Section regarding both strategies. The Metro representative to the IAFC will be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress relative to this strategy to the Metro Section.

- 4.1. Gain stakeholder input from IAFC and other fire service partners on the identification of key leadership positions and of potential fire service candidates.

These organizations have a good understanding of the stake that the fire service has in accomplishing this goal. By seeking a broad range of input, DHS and the fire service will benefit with respect to this important goal.

- 4.2. Identify and compile a list of key leadership and meaningful advisory positions within DHS that the fire service needs to support or influence and continue to identify and advocate for new positions to be added within the federal system to provide policy and program oversight. *The IAFC has begun the development of a list of key positions within DHS. Metro Chiefs recognizes that many leaders in the fire service may not have considered seeking a role at the federal level. The first step in achieving this goal is to identify positions of importance to the fire service and to identify individuals who might excel in these positions.*

The IAFC has submitted resumes of eight fire chiefs, six of which are Metro chiefs, directly to the Chief of Staff of DHS for his consideration in filling available positions. The Metro Board will continue to work with the IAFC and monitor DHS appointments in an effort to achieve this strategy. An analysis of DHS job descriptions must be accomplished in cooperation with the IAFC to identify current and needed positions suited for qualified fire chiefs. The Metro Chair will communicate with the IAFC Executive Director regarding this strategy.

- 4.3. Develop an internal committee with the Metro Chiefs to work with IAFC to screen interested individuals and to recommend candidates for leadership positions at the federal level.

Once a list of possible candidates has been developed, Metro Chiefs needs to have mechanisms in place to ensure that those recommended for positions are both interested and available. Monitor IAFC's efforts to gain Department of Homeland Security support for the Preparedness Directorate and provide additional support when feasible. Congressional support is important, however, support from within DHS is critical to the effectiveness and successful creation of this Directorate. The IAFC has an ongoing initiative which can be influenced and supported by the Metro Chiefs.

4.4. Encourage fire chiefs to partner with their labor organizations to sell the idea of fire service participation at the federal level.

Labor organizations have well established contacts and relationships at the federal level.

Collaborating with these organizations on the broad strategies of increasing federal recognition of the role of the fire service is a critical component of long-term success in these initiatives.

The Metro Section shall create a position paper in cooperation with the IAFC and IAFF supporting the need for local level management and labor to work together to market fire service participation at the federal level. Metro members will be selected to submit articles to fire service periodicals and newsletters of IAFC, NFPA and the IAFF.

Goal 5: Educate DHS and other federal officials on the specific needs, strengths, and assets of the nation's fire service in order to create and expand the fire service voice in emerging issues.

Discussion: Metro Chiefs recognizes that exerting influence at the federal level requires that they provide input to the federal government, and in particular, DHS. The vision is to create increased understanding of the scope of the fire service's diverse expertise which, in turn, sets the stage for greater influence in the implementation and operational phases of federal activity.

Strategies:

The achievement of these strategies must be facilitated by the IAFC in partnership with NFPA and supported by the Metro Board and members. The Metro Chiefs/UASI Coalition will have a significant impact on strategies 5.2 – 5.4 and, therefore, must be included in their objectives. The Metro Chair will communicate with the IAFC Executive Director and NFPA to develop an action plan to accomplish these strategies.

- 5.1. Work with the IAFC and NFPA to develop and distribute position papers on DHS issues.

One of the most successful means of influencing public policy is the development and distribution of position papers on key issues that are endorsed and distributed by leading fire service organizations. The IAFC has initiated such a practice with its White Paper entitled "Increasing the Security of the United States of America through Improvements & Enhancements in the Operation, Structure and Policies of the US Department of Homeland Security". Metro Chiefs intends to become a more active participant in these efforts.

- 5.2. Identify and meet with key DHS decision-makers at the program level to develop relationships and focus on emerging fire service issues.

Developing relationships with decision-makers in federal government agencies is recognized as equally important as the relationships developed with legislators.

- 5.3. In collaboration with the IAFC and NFPA, develop talking points for fire chiefs to use at the local, state, and federal levels, on the fire service's need to participate in the decision-making process, and the importance of a coordinated emergency response.

The importance of having common language to speak to key individuals is not limited to the federal legislative arena. Agencies and organizations throughout government need to have a better understanding of the critical roles the fire service serves and the need to have a seat at the table at all levels of decision-making. This strategy reflects issues similar to those articulated in Goal 3.2.

- 5.4. Highlight the volume of resources and expertise residing in the American fire service and the significance of the impact in homeland security.

There is no consistent, broadly understood message that has been developed to convey the scope and depth of the resources and expertise that exists within Metro Chiefs and the other key partners in the fire service, which can greatly further homeland security efforts within America.

Goal 6: Monitor and evaluate fire service training program requirements and needs in conjunction with the IAFC and NFPA in order for Metro Section members to exert meaningful input and influence on training.

Discussion: A critical aspect of all fire service activities is the recognition of the importance of properly trained and equipped personnel. These individuals are expected to provide services in an all-hazard environment with broad multi-disciplined training. Metro Chiefs intends to be more proactive in becoming a stronger advocate for the best training and resources for fire service personnel.

Strategies:

These strategies are included in the IAFC strategic plan. The Metro Section will seek formal participation in, and inclusion on, the task groups charged with accomplishing the action plans developed to achieve these strategies. The Metro Chair will communicate with the IAFC Executive Director to ensure that Metro Section members are involved.

- 6.1. Coordinate efforts with State Training Directors.
Relationships with key personnel at the state level are fundamental to designing and delivering state-of-the art training and resources.
- 6.2. Coordinate efforts with IAFC, NFPA, the IAB, National Fire Academy and other fire service organizations.
The IAFC is a recognized organization that works toward the betterment of working conditions and training of fire service personnel. By partnering with existing initiatives and multiple partners, Metro Chiefs will be better able to ensure that a consistent message is conveyed to decision-makers.
- 6.3. Coordinate efforts with IAFC's EMS Section and Safety Health & Survival Section.
The fire service has a significant investment in helping define the scope of services including the key role played by emergency medical providers as first responders. This strategy ensures that the training goals recognize the experience of EMS in defining broad standards for EMS personnel.
- 6.4. Communicate currently identified needs and future projections to DHS on a regular basis. *A well-organized, comprehensive, and informed position regarding training issues can influence current and future federal funding of programs.*