

Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association

Strategic Plan

March 2010



Emergency Services Consulting
International

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association (OVFA) strategic planning team developed this document to provide a clear and consistent focus for the organization. This plan incorporates this group's critical analysis of the current environment, the views and opinions of its members as discovered through a survey, and an assessment of the organization's needs moving forward.

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ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

THE MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of an organization is intended to describe, in succinct terms, the purpose for the organization's existence. It articulates the principal reason for the organization's presence within the response community.

The OVFA, through a consensus process, developed the mission statement below.

OVFA Mission Statement

Promote Oregon volunteer emergency responders through education, training, and advocacy

THE VISION STATEMENTS

In addition to knowing who they are and understanding their beliefs, all successful organizations need to define where they expect to be in the future. After having established the organization's mission, the next logical step is to establish a vision of what OVFA should be in the future. Vision statements provide targets of excellence that the organization will strive towards and provide a basis for their goals and objectives. The following vision statements were developed for the OVFA.

OVFA Vision Statements

The Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association will be:

- **Recognized as an organization able to anticipate change and promote innovation**
- **The premier source of education and training for volunteer emergency responders**
- **The leading local, state, and national advocate for volunteer emergency responders**
- **The leading resource for volunteer recruitment and retention assistance**

VALUES

Establishing values embraced by all members of an organization is extremely important. They recognize those features and considerations that make up the personality of the organization. Those assembled for the OVFA strategic planning process felt it absolutely necessary to declare the following statement of values for the organization.

OVFA Values

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

Accountability

We value transparency and accountability with our members' resources.

Social and Professional Networking

We value the camaraderie of the organization.

Communication

We value open and honest two-way communication with our members.

Ethics

We value practicing the highest standards of ethical behavior by the organization and its members.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the mission and vision of the OVFA, realistic strategic initiatives and objectives must be established. Strategic initiatives (a clear statement of desired outcome) and objectives (specific activities and projects that contribute to achievement of the initiative) are necessary to provide the individual members with clear direction.

The strategic planning team set priorities for the accomplishment of specific objectives. Those that carried higher priorities are scheduled for completion first and lower priority objectives scheduled later. Overall these strategic initiatives and objectives provide very specific timelines for the next several years and more general timelines beyond that.

The leadership of OVFA will meet periodically to review progress towards these strategic initiatives and objectives and adjust timelines and specific targets as needs and the environment change.

Strategic Initiative 1 – Develop and promote effective and comprehensive two-way communication between OVFA members and the board, and between the OVFA and its partner organizations and associations.

Objective 1-A Create an up-to-date email list for members and partner organizations and a procedure for keeping it current

Responsibility OVFA Staff

Timelines October 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Request email addresses from member departments
- Revise membership renewal form so it captures department member emails
- Request email addresses from partner organizations
- Sort email addresses into appropriate groups
- Develop a protocol identifying who may use the list and what information is appropriate to be transmitted using group email

Objective 1-B Enhance the OVFA website so news and announcements can be transmitted to members through various social media

Responsibility 1st Vice President

Timelines June 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Establish RSS feeds to various social media paths
- Advertise availability of RSS feeds and subscriber instruction to members
- Identify who will post information to website
- Identify what information will be posted
- Establish a schedule to periodically evaluate the utilization of this communications system

Strategic Initiative 2 – Develop a transparent and accountable financial system that provides for sustainable delivery of services to members

Objective 2-A **Complete and publish a comprehensive third-party audit of OVFA financial records**

Responsibility Secretary/Treasurer

Timelines March 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Allocate funds to conduct the third-party financial audit
- Select an auditor and complete the audit process
- Implement changes recommended by the third-party auditor after Board review of the audit recommendations
- Publish the results of the audit and the Board's response to audit recommendations to OVFA membership

Objective 2-B **Develop a financial management plan through a comprehensive review of the cost of OVFA services and the revenues required to provide sustainable service delivery**

Responsibility President

Timelines June 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Identify and prioritize services provided
- Identify the cost of delivering each service
- Identify to what degree each service may be self-funding
- Identify services that cannot be delivered because of insufficient sustainable revenue
- Report the results of this review and financial management plan to OVFA members

Objective 2-C Develop new and sustainable revenues to support the delivery of important services that cannot be funded with existing revenue

Responsibility President

Timelines December 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Identify potential revenue opportunities
 - Dues modification or increase
 - Sponsorships
 - Public fundraising
 - Other
- Evaluate each source of potential revenue for the amount of funding that can be generated and the funding source's sustainability
- Identify preferred options and present these to the membership for consideration and comment
- Implement preferred revenue generation alternatives

Objective 2-D Develop and implement a marketing program to generate new membership and re-enlist past members

Responsibility 2nd Vice President

Timelines March 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Identify the message to be delivered to potential members
 - Services available to members (i.e. training and education, legislative advocacy, etc.)
 - Other benefits (insurance programs, surplus equipment, etc.)
 - Cost versus benefits of membership
- Identify non-member fire departments, districts, and associations
- Develop marketing material including pamphlets, brochures, and others
- Distribute marketing materials to non-members and follow-up with personal contacts
- Identify opportunities for in-person presentations to fire service groups (i.e. fire defense board meetings) and schedule OVFA leadership to attend and market OVFA
- Review the results of the marketing effort to evaluate success and identify adjustments needed to improve results

Strategic Initiative 3 – Provide a variety of services that are valued, sustainable, accessible, meet the needs of members, and are widely known to be available

Objective 3-A Develop and distribute information to OFCA and OFDDA describing education, training, and other services provided by the OVFA

Responsibility 1st Year Director

Timelines November 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Develop a comprehensive list of services and programs offered by OVFA
- Create a description of the benefits of each service for both the department/district and individual volunteers (see Objective 2-D)
- Produce a flyer encompassing this information
- Distribute the flyer to all volunteer and combination departments/districts in the state via mail and make it available as a download on the OVFA website

Objective 3-B Develop a regional outreach training and education program

Responsibility 1st Vice President

Timelines June 2012

Critical Tasks:

- Survey members to determine training they would like to see offered regionally
- Identify and develop partnerships (i.e. OFIA) that can assist with identifying instructors and delivering desired training and education
- Develop a budget to deliver the training and education outreach program including expected costs and revenues, including potential attendee fees
- Develop a delivery plan including sites, schedule, instructors, and other logistics
- Develop marketing materials for the program and distribute to members and non-member departments/districts through multiple pathways

Strategic Initiative 4 – Represent our members’ interests at the state and national level by providing effective and competent advocacy

Objective 4-A Develop a system to solicit legislative issues and concerns from members

Responsibility Staff

Timelines September 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Post questions about legislative priorities for response by members on social media sites
- Post current legislative issues on the website and solicit input from members
- Send email questionnaires to volunteer association presidents regarding legislative issues
- Compile a list of legislative priorities and positions and publish for member review

Objective 4-B Develop and provide a post-session legislative report to members

Responsibility Staff

Timelines September 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Write a synopsis of legislative session actions and the impact on volunteer fire service
- Publish the report to the website and email it to the member group email list
- Solicit feedback from members for use in future sessions

Objective 4-C Work with other associations to identify state-level legislative solutions to the volunteer issues

Responsibility President/Staff

Timelines September 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Identify partner associations who will support legislative solutions
- List issues to be resolved at the state level
 - State income taxation/ Unemployment insurance
 - Tax check-off
 - Cancer presumption
- Develop legislative concepts for discussion
- Identify legislators willing to propose legislation
- Support the legislative process with information and testimony

Strategic Initiative 5 – Develop the OVFA as an effective, open, and progressive organization, that continually develops future leadership

Objective 5-A Create a leadership development program for Board members

Responsibility Staff

Timelines March 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Review and revise Board position descriptions
- Identify leadership skills needed for success in each Board position
- Identify sources of training for listed skills
- Make funding available so Board members can attend training

Objective 5-B Manage implementation of the strategic plan

Responsibility President

Timelines April 2010

Critical Tasks:

- Provide a draft copy of the strategic plan to members and solicit feedback
- Review member comments and revise the strategic plan as appropriate
- Adopt and publish the strategic plan. Provide copies to partner organizations
- Include an item on each Board meeting agenda to review strategic plan progress
- Schedule the annual strategic plan update

Objective 5-D Revise, adopt, and publish a Code of Ethics for the OVFA and its members

Responsibility 2nd Year Director

Timelines June 2011

Critical Tasks:

- Appoint a project team to develop a Code of Ethics representing a cross-section of the membership
- Review Code of Ethics documents from OVFA and other associations and organizations
- Develop a draft Code of Ethics for OVFA and publish it to members for comment
- Revise the draft Code of Ethics as appropriate, formally adopt it, and publish it to the membership

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The OVFA selected the following performance objectives and established targets where improvement from current performance was desired.

1. At least 80% of all Oregon fire departments/district with volunteers will be members of OVFA.
2. At least 60% of all Oregon fire departments with volunteers will be represented at the annual conference.
3. OVFA will be represented on 100% of all state committees, commissions and boards related to the provision of fire and emergency services policy.
4. 90% of all members will rate the OVFA's services as "very good" or better.

APPENDIX

The OVFA completed an assessment of current condition through the identification of organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. These are reprinted here to give context to the reader and to provide an opportunity for future review to determine how these may change over time as a result of organizational efforts.

STRENGTHS

It is important for any organization to identify their strengths in order to assure they are capable of providing the services requested by customers and to ensure that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary community needs that match those strengths. Through a consensus process, the strengths of OVFA were identified.

Strengths of OVFA

- Membership has a strong belief in volunteerism
- Quality training opportunities for our members
- A strong voice in legislative advocacy
- A high level of camaraderie amongst our members
- Volunteers have a strong commitment to loyalty
- We maintain strong professionalism/relationships with other emergency service organizations
- Nationally, volunteers save taxpayers 37 billion dollars per year
- Have Oregon representative on the National Volunteer Fire Council Executive Board

WEAKNESSES

Performance or lack of performance within an organization depends greatly on the identification of weaknesses and how they are confronted. For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it does not function well or not at all.

Weaknesses of OVFA

- Poor communication with our members and decision makers
- We don't convey to our members what we do
- Lack of long-term consistency of vision
- The lack of fiscal responsibility
- Disconnect with membership on issues such as delivering the type of training needed
We are not delivering what they request or want
- We spend more than we bring in
- We are not doing a good job using the programs we have available to generate face-to-face contact with members
- No long term financial plan
- Our message to legislators is not as effective as it could be
- Relationship with other associations is not as effective as needed particularly with OFCA

OPPORTUNITIES

Many things exist as unrealized opportunities for the organization. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional service area. Many opportunities exist for OFVA.

Opportunities for OVFA

- Develop a stable financial condition that supports the delivery of services
- Ability to expand our membership base
- Refocus the types of training we provide
- Develop partnerships with other entities
- Become a more recognized advocate for volunteers in state and national legislation
- Use modern technology to reach volunteers
- Inform members and volunteer associations of available resources and benefits (HEART ACT)

THREATS

There are conditions in the internal and external environment that are not under the organization's control. However, by being aware of them, the organization can develop plans and programs to either mitigate or respond when a threat becomes reality. By recognizing possible threats, an organization can greatly reduce the potential for loss.

Threats to OVFA

- Time constraints and load demand thrust upon volunteers (state and federal mandates)
- Lack of leadership succession to run the organization
- External economic factors that impact financial stability
- Legislators distracted by issues other than ours
- Changes in state and national regulations and laws
- Membership losing confidence in board leadership