

Illinois Fire Chiefs Association Strategic Plan 2020-2023





ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN

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ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Executive Board

Chief Greg Earle, President

Chief Donald Shoevlin, First Vice President

Chief John Kachanuk, Second Vice President

Chief Mark Puknaitis, Immediate Past President

Chief John Christian, Past President

Directors

Chief Rich Mikel ♦ Chief Tom Deegan (retired) ♦ Chief Chad Hoefle

Chief Tom Styczynski ♦ Chief Brian Lambel ♦ Chief Al Yancey

Area Representatives

Chief Sid Aurand

Chief Anthony Huemann

Chief Dell Urban

Chief Randy Deicke

Chief Brian Kolosh

Chief Paul Macaluso

Chief Jim Walters

Chief Annette Nance-Holt

Chief John Knapp

Chief Ed St. Louis

Chief Damon Schuldt

Chief Joe Henning

Chief Mick Humer

Chief James Whiteford

Chief Robert Tutko

Chief Chuck Lauss

Chief Shawn Priddy

IAFC Great Lakes Representatives

Chief Matt Knott, IFCA Representative

IFCA Staff

Chief Jim Grady (retired) Executive Director

Maureen Griseto ♦ David Slivinski

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Strategic Plan Approval

The IFCA strategic plan is a working document that is intended to be used not only as a reflection of what the association represents but also a summary of present and future goals, initiatives and direction for both short and long-term initiatives.

This document is designed to be updated every 3 years but reviewed annually as necessary as the association changes its focus and potential direction over time. This document shall be used as a guiding tool for the association and as a means of providing communication and transparency for its membership, partners and associates.

Greg Earle

Chief Greg Earle, President

May 13, 2020

Date

Donald Shoevlin

Chief Donald Shoevlin First Vice President

May 13, 2020

Date

John Kachanuk

Chief John Kachanuk, Second Vice President

May 13, 2020

Date

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Executive Director Summary:

To: IFCA Executive Board
IFCA Membership

Greetings; As Executive Director of the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association it is my honor to open our Strategic Plan with this introductory letter as one of observation and support for our organization as together, we move forward into our future.

The IFCA is a strong and vital organization within the State of Illinois that over the years has built our reputation on Fire Service Excellence and cooperative efforts with all our Fire Service partners. To that end, I feel that we have fulfilled that commitment and will maintain a commitment as we continue to move forward with enhanced opportunities for our organization and membership.

Within this living document you will read about our history, you will see what we have identified as our values and you will see our plans for today, tomorrow as well as our future visions.

This plan is and will always be a living and evolving document that will be updated to include a yearly review. In 2020, the review will take place at our annual symposium where the board will meet to discuss the path our organization is on and is it consistent with our plans. Starting in January of 2021 the plan will move to a calendar year for what should be a more detailed yearly look at the organization.

This document will provide a variety of chapters that will give a clear image as to who we the IFCA are and how we operate. Our document will be not only a learning tool for all of us but one that shows our commitment to the Education-Research Foundation, The Illinois Association of Administrative Professionals, The Volunteer Combination Officer Section and all our committees

I would be remised if I did not thank our previous directors of Jerry Burke, Robert Buhs and Tim Sashko who have set the foundation from which we build upon. I must also thank Maureen Griseto, Dave Slivinski, our Directors, Area Representatives along with committee chairs and members who have developed the plan along many of the materials contained within. I must also acknowledge the Presidents for their commitment to our plan and its constant revision when necessary.

I close with repeating, we the IFCA are a strong organization that will continue to enhance our presence in the Fire Service not only in Illinois and the Great Lakes, but in the nation.

Respectfully Submitted

James M. Grady III

Executive Director IFCA



ILLINOIS FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

Dedicated to excellence in the Fire Service

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Chief Greg Earle, President

Centralia FPD

Members of the IFCA,

The Executive Board and its Stakeholders have always reviewed our Strategic plan at our Spring Symposium once a year. Some changes have come this year. In trying to keep this document up to date the IFCA Board has decided to do multiple reviews through out the year . The idea is to have it being looked at multiple times is to get better input and a better plan without the rush to update at one meeting. It will still be adopted in the spring at the Symposium but we believe our board can be more involved and make a better document with this procedure.

Remember the IFCA is a very diverse association. We serve career, volunteer, paid on call and part time departments large and small. So, with the assistant of our many stakeholders working alongside our board I see only good in our future.

With that said. I send out a Thank You to everyone who keeps this association running.

Respectfully

Greg Earle

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Organizational Background:

History

On August 3, 1951, nine fire chiefs from northeastern Illinois gathered in River Forest to discuss their mutual concerns. From this meeting came the impetus to continue meeting, and to begin an organization which years later, has become one of the leading organizations in the Illinois fire service – the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association (IFCA). The IFCA Mission follows:

The Illinois Fire Chiefs Association is dedicated to promoting excellence in the fire service by providing an information-sharing network and by offering educational, legislative and technical opportunities to our diverse membership and associated partnerships.

The IFCA is composed of nearly 1,300 members and requires proactive management to meet the needs of this large, diverse group. The Executive Board was expanded to meet both the needs and the mission of the Association. Currently, there are 20 elected positions on the Executive Board, which includes the positions of President, two Vice-Presidents, five Directors, one Retired Director, and Area Representatives for eleven regional areas. The position of Area 5 (City of Chicago) is appointed by the Fire Commissioner of Chicago. The IFCA created several committees, which focus on individual areas of concern or specific projects. There are both standing and external committees which meet regularly and report their activities to the membership through the Association's publications and website.

Over the past several years, the IFCA has increased its daily workload by representing the general membership on numerous regional and state committees that were created to draft legislation or to modify state-mandated programs or projects. Since the IFCA represents the state's fire and EMS leadership, when requested to participate on those committees, the Association must represent our interests and concerns. But more importantly, the IFCA has expanded its professional service offerings to include consulting services which benefit both the Association financially, and the community requesting our studies.

IFCA Personnel

Executive Director- 1 Program Director - 1 Administrative Assistant - 1

Standing Committees

Chief Emeritus Chief of the Year Medal of Honor Administrative Professionals Legislative EMS State Fair
Symposium Conference VCOC Procedures& By-Laws Funeral Marketing/Membership
Data & Resource Communications/9-1-1 Codes & Standards Accreditation Transportation



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Planning Steps

Key steps of the Strategic Planning Process include:

1. Selecting a Strategic Planning process and team. A broad cross-section of the association is ideal for the make-up of the team.
2. Identifying the association's mission, vision and values.
This step answers "what, who, how and why" for the association. This step attempts to clarify the association's reason for being and where it wants to be.
3. Identify internal and external partners. To help define the people and resources with which the fire department must collaborate and to help identify those who are impacted by the decisions and actions members take.
4. Conduct a Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Challenges (SWOC) analysis to help create focus on the issues facing the association. Strengths and weaknesses are generally internal to the organization, while opportunities and challenges evaluate external factors.
5. Identify and define the strategic objectives and goals. This step attempts to define and describe broadly what the association must do well to be successful.
6. Select specific programs or projects to complement strategic objectives; links the strategic objectives to tangible efforts towards meeting the mission of the association. This step generally also requires specific measurement strategies to help evaluate progress.
7. Document the planning process and review periodically. This step creates the "blueprint" and provides a reference to guide future planning.



Planning Process

Concurrently, the IFCA Executive Board facilitated a process, utilizing management staff expertise, to identify and refine the agency's visions and values.

As the association charts its course over the long-term, it must map concrete strategies that will allow it to focus on the vision. These strategies for achieving the mission and vision are the strategic objectives. They will change as the agency advances toward the goals set out in the Strategic Plan, as long as the department decides its focus should change in order to achieve its mission and vision.

The project list tracks the initiatives the association undertakes to improve its performance within the strategic objectives. A new project that is initiated and assigned resources should always be aligned with, and in support of, the association's strategic objectives.

Because the association has a limited amount of resources, it must decide how best to allocate the resources it does have. Those decisions should not be made arbitrarily, but rather in support of the association's strategies and based on data that helps to clarify the association's needs.

Methodology for Future Updates to the Plan

The Strategic Plan is designed to offer guidance for the 3-5-year time horizon. As such, it should be reviewed annually by department staff and executive board to ensure that the mission, vision and community expectations have not dramatically changed. Initiatives should undergo a rigorous analysis to evaluate their value in achieving alignment with the Strategic Objectives. Each initiative should also be analyzed for resource requirements. Once this review is complete and the initiative continues to receive the board support, a project plan can be drafted to begin comprehensive development and implementation.

This document should also be updated on a continual basis to ensure that assumptions, stakeholder desires and economic factors continue to be relevant. The specific planning steps may change, but the association should actively seek input from multiple partners and groups to ensure future planning is considerate of a diverse set of expectations and demands.



Planning Assumptions

In developing a mid to long-term strategic plan, it is necessary to rely on certain assumptions based on information that is currently available. Upon accessing information which reflects the community, there are key assumptions that can be formulated. The following are key assumptions and challenges that have been identified to exist by the Illinois Fire Chiefs' Assn. over the next five to ten years.

Key Assumptions

1. Legislation – (local, state and national levels)
2. VCOC Challenges of Career vs Volunteer
 - Recruitment and Retention
3. Assessment Services
 - Succession Planning
 - Station Location
 - Emphasis on blended departments; career, combination and volunteer
 - Consolidation
 - Personnel and Equipment
 - Promotion, Certification and levels of Training
4. Board Members
 - Recruitment
 - Participation
 - Diversification
 - Certification and levels of Training
 - Chief Membership
 - Who is the IFCA and what do they do for me?
 - Communications
 - Succession Planning
5. Collaboration with Partners
 - Unification
 - Technology
 - Funding and Grants
 - CRR Vision 20/20

PRIORITIES: Communications, Transparency, Assessment Services, VCOC, Membership



FCA Mission, Vision and Values – Our Building Blocks



MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Fire Chiefs' Association is to function as the Illinois representative for the fire service through inclusive participation of diverse fire organizations by being proactive through communications at all levels.

VISION STATEMENT

To strive for membership diversity as we promote new and advanced training and information related to safety, health and development.

VALUES

Credibility

Integrity

Sustainability

Diversity

Tradition/History

Trust

Responsiveness

Representation

Reliability

Resourcefulness



Internal & External Stakeholder Key Inputs:

A critical element of the strategic planning process also included the participation of representatives of the internal stakeholder's group. These members met to discuss the organizations approach to the strategic planning process as well as identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges (SWOC analysis). These members met during the IFCA Annual Symposium in May of 2019 to review the feedback gathered from the external group and to drill down into the key elements, ultimately defining several focus areas where organizational goals and objectives will be derived. The internal stakeholder group consists of representatives from a cross section of the following groups, affiliates and partners of the association:

IFCA Educational and Research Foundation

IFCA Administrative Professionals

Illinois Assn. of Fire Protection Districts

State of Illinois Fire Marshal's Office

Northern Illinois Assoc. of FPD's

Illinois Fire Service Institute

Illinois MABAS

Illinois Fire Safety Alliance

International Assn. Of Fire Chiefs

Illinois Fire Service Assn

Illinois Society of Fire Inspectors

Illinois Society of Fire Instructors

Illinois Fire Mechanics Apparatus Assn

Governor's Office

Great Lakes Division – IAFC

Associated Fire Fighter of Illinois

Wisconsin Fire Chiefs' Assn.

Various Sponsors-Vendors



Legislative Leadership & Involvement



The IFCA is dedicated to helping our membership through continued aggressive and thoughtful involvement in the legislative process. The State statutes and administrative rules impact every fire organization in Illinois – career, part time or volunteer; municipal or Fire District – in every facet of providing emergency services. While the IFCA may introduce legislation, a significant amount of energy is devoted to evaluating proposed legislation and the potential impact on fire service in Illinois. We may advocate for legislation introduced by others, we often work to amend or stop legislative efforts that negatively impact our members and, frequently, we have no position, watching legislation as it moves through the legislative process. With nearly 10,000 bills introduced each two-year General Assembly, there is much work to do.

While the IFCA has a strong Springfield presence through our lobbyist, we count on the members of our legislative committee to provide guidance and background. When necessary, we will engage our membership to either promote or oppose legislation that impacts our members. Annually, the IFCA sponsors a Legislative Day in Springfield with our partners, the Northern Illinois Alliance of Fire Protection Districts and the Illinois Fire District Association. This is an important day for the Legislators to meet our members.

The IFCA is also involved with legislative efforts nationally. Annually, the IFCA is represented in Washington, DC during the Fire Service Institute lobby events. This is an important time for the Illinois congressional delegation to meet with our fire chiefs. This event is coordinated through the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the Great Lakes Division.

Maintaining a legislative presence, particularly at the State level, is vital to the mission of the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association. As a highly respected organization, legislators and their staffs continually look for our view on legislative initiatives. Through our legislative efforts we are able to help define the direction of the Fire Service in Illinois.

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Strengths of the IFCA	
VCOC	
Promotional Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and Development • Professional Services Provided • Succession Planning
Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for education • Scholarship Programs
Leadership	
History	
Meeting Expectations	
Communications	
Adapting to Change	
Diversity	
Website / Facebook	
Participation by members	
Finances	
Partnership with Internal and External Stakeholders. Pg 13	
Weaknesses of the IFCA	
Telling our story	
Communications	
North vs South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting southern and western area Chief's involved in IFCA • VCOC – membership, conference, succession planning • Recruitment and retention; full understanding of the difficulties
Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Format change, making the conference more attractive • Training • Arming Chief Officers to do their jobs better
Legislative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession planning



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Opportunities of the IFCA

Legislative

Assessment center and consulting services

Social Media

VCOC

Conference / Symposium

Communications; tell our story

Education/ Conferences/ Public Speaking and Presentations

Leadership

Partnerships

Growth of IFCA Board

Threats of the IFCA

Economic/ Budget

Government/ Politics/Labor

Turnover

Us versus them concepts

Succession planning for the IFCA Board, Committees and Presidents

Labor concerns of full vs part time





Strategic goals of the IFCA:

Legislation Assessment Services VCOC
Board Diversity Partnership Collaboration

Strategic Goal 1: Legislation

COMMENTS:

Continue to be advocates for the Illinois Fire Service at the State and National levels. We will be an **active voice** from the perspective of the Fire Chief. We will partner with other fire groups who share our common interests.

Strategic Goal 2: Assessment & Consulting Services

COMMENTS:

New re-branding campaign. Continue to support with a watchful eye the expansion of our services both within our state and to neighboring states. The addition and support of the statewide CRR program.

Strategic Goal 3: VCOC

COMMENTS:

Work diligently with the committee for membership growth, board succession and rebuilding of the annual conference. Representation throughout the state to deliver programs and educate the understanding of recruitment and retention.



Strategic Goal 4: Board Diversity

COMMENTS:

Maintain the board representation as a cross section of those we represent Volunteer, Combination and Career.

Strategic Goal 5: Partnership Collaboration

COMMENTS:

Continue to build relationships with our partners so that we have a strong voice to advocate for the fire service in protection, prevention, education and safety.

ACTION ITEM(s):

Promote our IFCA and VCOC social media outlets.

Promote and direct others to our Website.

Continue to build our information technology abilities.

Succession planning for the IFCA board and our committees.

Support to our assessment consulting service arm as request continue to grow.

Support CRR development and program launch within the state.

Provide education for Chief's throughout the state and Chief officers so they can excel.

Transparent communication at all levels of the association and its membership.

Continue to seek out creative solutions to issues, find ways to become more efficient, be fiscally responsible while carrying out our mission statement to the fullest.