



**Company Officers Section**  
**International Association of Fire Chiefs**

**Strategic Plan**  
**Goals and Objectives**  
**2016 – 2019**

# Who We Are

## **Mission**

The mission of the Company Officers Section of the International Association of Fire Chiefs is to provide information, education, services, and representation to company officers to enhance their professionalism and service to the community.

## **Vision**

To provide leadership for Company Officer issues within the fire and rescue service through building relationships with all key stakeholders. To provide growth to current and aspiring company officers through education, training, mentoring, and networking. To gather and disseminate information that is current and relevant to all company officers within the fire and rescue service in a timely manner.

# LEAD

## ***Aspiration Statement***

It is the intention of the Company Officers Section to take an active role in preparing its members to demonstrate high levels of leadership and professionalism throughout their careers by providing information about resources necessary for their on-going education and professional development.

## ***Scope of the Lead Goals***

The Lead goals set the strategic direction of the Company Officers Section.

## ***Goals and Objectives***

**Goal #1:       Articulate and communicate the value provided by the Company Officers Section both as a leader within the fire and rescue service and as a key resource for the development of company officers**

Objective 1-A: Identify the value provided by the Company Officers Section

Objective 1-B: Provide information about the value members can obtain from their Company Officers Section membership

Objective 1-C: Identify the skills required for members to communicate that value effectively to others, and provide information about resources for members to become proficient at those skills

Objective 1-D: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the COS's marketing efforts as they relate to both having the COS recognized as a leader within the fire and rescue service, and as providing great value for individual COS embers by enabling them to be effective leaders on and off the fire ground

**Goal #2:       Develop and maintain a process for increasing membership in the COS and in the IAFC**

Objective 2-A: Obtain information about the COS's current members, including how many, how they learned about the COS, their demographics, and their agencies' demographics

Objective 2-B: Work with other IAFC sections and committees to learn how those organizations have been successful in recruiting and retaining new members

Objective 2-C: COS Board of Directors sets annual goals for manageable growth

Objective 2-D: Develop a process for identifying, contacting, recruiting, and retaining new members for the COS

Objective 2-E: Engage in marketing efforts within and outside the IAFC

Objective 2-F: Investigate the possibility of offering scholarships for professional development purposes to COS members

Objective 2-G: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the process used to increase the level of membership compared to the stated goals

**Goal #3: Develop partnerships with organizations that can provide resources for the professional development of company officers**

Objective 3-A: Identify organizations that offer relevant courses and experiences that enable company officers to be leaders, not just officers, in the states and offices as well as on the fire ground

Objective 3-B: Identify the message the COS wishes to convey to potential partners

Objective 3-C: Survey COS members to find out what partnerships they would find beneficial for career opportunities

Objective 3-D: Develop a process for partnership development

Objective 3-E: Build relationships within the IAFC with people and entities who are able to provide resources for professional development for company officers

Objective 3-F: Establish and maintain outreach programs with outside leadership agencies

Objective 3-G: (formerly objective 1-F) Identify opportunities with internal and external partners (e.g., training, development, experiences) for company officers to enhance their existing leadership skills and competencies, and to learn new ones

Objective 3-H: Periodically evaluate (a) all relationships for effectiveness and improvement and (b) the process's effectiveness in meeting the stated goal

**Goal #4: Develop and implement an effective communication strategy for the Company Officers Section**

Objective 4-A: Research how other organizations communicate effectively with their stakeholders

Objective 4-B: Identify the various stakeholder groups and how their members prefer to receive information

Objective 4-C: Identify the media that effectively enable company officers to address issues related to their professional development

Objective 4-D: Develop a process for communication that will be used as a template for all messages from the COS. The process must include a vetting mechanism for all messages as well as an evaluation of their

effectiveness. Assign deadlines to ensure timeliness of messages.

Objective 4-E: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the communication strategy, including the extent to which it addresses all issues.

**Goal #5: Install processes and mechanisms to set and adhere to the highest professional standards**

Objective 5-A: Engage COS members in a discussion about the standards they would like to see the fire and rescue service set; co-create a common “big picture” based on the results of that discussion

Objective 5-B: Identify the elements that must be included to establish and adhere to such standards (e.g., defining and describing the standards, designing vetting and evaluation mechanisms into all processes, achieving consistency)

Objective 5-C: Educate COS members about these standards, what’s in it for them to commit to them, and how they can begin to implement them in their own agencies and careers

Objective 5-D: Periodically evaluate the effectiveness of these standards in terms of raising the bar throughout the fire and rescue service

## **EDUCATE**

### ***Aspiration Statement***

It is the intention of the Company Officers Section to take an active role in preparing its members to demonstrate high levels of leadership and professionalism throughout their careers by providing information about resources necessary for their on-going education and professional development.

### ***Scope of the Educate Goals***

The Educate goals support the strategic direction of the Company Officers Section by providing information about where and how its members may acquire the knowledge, skills, and competencies to provide the leadership necessary to operate effectively and professionally on and off the fire ground.

### ***Goals and Objectives***

**Goal #6: Advance knowledge-based professionalism in the fire and rescue service**

Objective 6-A: Define “knowledge-based professionalism” for the fire and rescue service

- Objective 6-B: Develop a list of available non-academic professional development resources related to knowledge-based professionalism that is relevant to company officers. “Non-academic” refers to articles, courses and conferences that relate to the fire and rescue service or leadership and management that do not offer college credit and are not technical, journal, or academic articles.
- Objective 6-C: Develop a list of available academic resources related to knowledge-based professionalism that is relevant to company officers. “Academic” refers to articles, courses and conferences that relate to the fire and rescue service or leadership and management that offer college or CEU credit and include technical, journal, and/or academic articles.
- Objective 6-D: Provide information about opportunities to use knowledge-based thinking in an operational setting
- Objective 6-E: Provide information about opportunities to use knowledge-based thinking in administrative settings
- Objective 6-F: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the Section’s efforts to advance knowledge-based professionalism in the fire and rescue service
- Objective 6-G: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in objective 6-F

**Goal #7: Enable company officers to meet or exceed the highest professional standards as established by the Company Officers Section by identifying relevant training and development resources**

- Objective 7-A: Define “highest professional standards” for the Company Officers Section
- Objective 7-B: Make research-based recommendations about best practices in establishing, implementing, and sustaining high professional standards both inside and outside the fire and rescue service
- Objective 7-C: Describe the roles and responsibilities of leadership positions generally found within the fire and rescue service, list examples of the expected impact of these leaders on the public safety mission, and provide examples of best practices to illustrate how these leaders exemplify high professional standards
- Objective 7-D: Educate company officers about the COS’s highest professional standards, why they should commit to adopting them, and how they can implement them in their home organizations.
- Objective 7-E: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of the training and development information and opportunities in enabling company officers to meet or exceed the COS’s highest professional standards
- Objective 7-F: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 7-E

**Goal #8: Educate company officers in the area of community outreach by identifying relevant training and development resources**

Objective 8-A: Co-create a desired “big picture” of the outcomes of community outreach

Objective 8-B: Develop a persuasive statement about why and how community outreach is a daily part of the company officer’s job

Objective 8-C: Identify materials and resources that educate COS members about how to research the decision-making processes within their own agencies, their local governments, and their communities

Objective 8-D: Identify educational materials and resources to develop and enhance COS members’ presentation skills

Objective 8-E: Identify educational materials and resources to develop and enhance COS members’ marketing skills

Objective 8-F: Identify materials and resources that educate company officers about how to discover, contact, and work with community stakeholders to identify their needs and their expectations of the fire and rescue service in general, as well as of their local agency

Objective 8-G: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of company officers’ efforts to achieve their desired “big picture” of their community outreach

Objective 8-H: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 8-G

**Goal #9: Facilitate the career path progression of company officers by educating them about, and identifying relevant training and development resources related to, the promotional process**

Objective 9-A: Describe the roles and responsibilities of positions generally found within the fire and rescue service, from recruit through fire chief, including the impact of each one on the public safety mission

Objective 9-B: Develop a sample career path for company officers using NFPA or other national standards

Objective 9-C: Provide examples of promotional criteria used for each rank

Objective 9-D: Identify materials and resources that educate company officers about how to acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience needed to promote to each rank

Objective 9-E: Identify or establish a forum in which COS members may share information about the promotional process

Objective 9-F: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of efforts to facilitate the career path progression of company officers

Objective 9-G: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 9-F

**Goal #10: Enable company officers to have a positive impact on their agencies and communities by educating them about, and identifying relevant training and development resources related to, implementation of a succession process**

- Objective 10-A: Develop a written resource (e.g., white paper or similar document) that describes a succession process, explains the impact that implementing a process can have on the community's level of public safety, and lists the benefits it provides to all stakeholder groups, both inside and outside the agency
- Objective 10-B: Develop a statement about the role the COS plays within the IAFC to prepare current and future leaders in the fire and rescue service
- Objective 10-C: Identify materials and resources that educate company officers about how to make a persuasive case for implementing a succession process in their own agencies
- Objective 10-D: Identify materials and resources that educate company officers about how to obtain the knowledge, skills, competencies, and/or experience to develop and implement a viable succession process in their own agencies
- Objective 10-E: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of efforts to educate company officers about issues related to the implementation of a succession process
- Objective 10-F: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 10-E

## **SERVE**

### ***Aspiration Statement***

It is the intention of the Company Officers Section to take an active role in preparing its members to demonstrate high levels of leadership and professionalism throughout their careers by providing information about resources necessary for their on-going education and professional development.

### ***Scope of the Serve Goals***

The Serve goals support the strategic direction of the Company Officers Section by providing timely information about resources, creating a repository of leadership resources easily accessible by members, identifying and/or establishing communication mechanisms that facilitate interaction among members, and maintaining a mentoring program for members.



## **Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal #11: Provide timely information about programs and other resources that meet the ever-changing educational and professional development demands of the company officer**

- Objective 11-A: Identify and communicate existing IAFC educational offerings tailored to COS members and potential members (e.g., COLS I, II, III courses and similar offerings)
- Objective 11-B: Create a COS clearinghouse (i.e., an archive or repository) of educational information that is easily accessible to members
- Objective 11-C: Market the mentor/mentee program to increase participation; create opportunities to build on existing program by marketing value to potential participants
- Objective 11-D: Maintain the mentor program by obtaining periodic feedback from those actively involved in mentoring relationships developed through the program
- Objective 11-E: Engage COS membership in formal learning opportunities found in internal and external research and information development project
- Objective 11-F: Increase member engagement in higher education and professional designation by educating members about the benefits of doing so
- Objective 11-G: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of efforts to provide timely information about programs and other resources for company officers' development
- Objective 11-H: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 11-G

### **Goal #12: Identify and/or provide forums (in-person and digital networking solutions) that allow company officers to share information on the current issues affecting them**

- Objective 12-A: Determine utilization of current digital forum/networking solutions (e.g., KnowledgeNet, podcast, and COS FB) to help determine preferred forum/networking solutions (*Data collection re: digital solutions*)
- Objective 12-B: Increase utilization of preferred digital forum/networking solutions through collaborative staff/committee effort to develop and post engaging and useful content/discussions (expand to video and etc.) (*Content creation re: digital solutions*)
- Objective 12-C: Determine utilization of current in-person networking solutions

(e.g., COLS “Shakers Forum” and conference networking events)  
(*Data collection re: in-person solutions*)

Objective 12-D: Staff/committee engage in collaborative effort to increase utilization of current in-person networking solutions, and develop new in-person networking and discussion solutions (*Content creation re: in-person solutions*)

Objective 12-E: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of efforts to identify forums that enable company officers effectively to share information with one another

Objective 12-F: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 12-E

**Goal #13: Increase membership in the Company Officers Section by raising awareness of its mission**

Objective 13-A: Gather data on the number of people who have entered the COLS I, II, III track and see if they are COS members for possible recruitment

Objective 13-B: Increase awareness of the Company Officers Section through its members’ involvement in committees/work groups and research projects throughout the IAFC by promoting the Section and advertising its benefits in all divisions and sections (e.g., strategic planning committee, boards)

Objective 13-C: Develop an evaluation process to assess the effectiveness of efforts to increase membership in the COS by raising awareness of its mission

Objective 13-D: Implement and maintain the evaluation process described in Objective 13-C