WASHINGTON FIRE CHIEFS

2015 ~ 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

"We Serve, Educate & Lead"
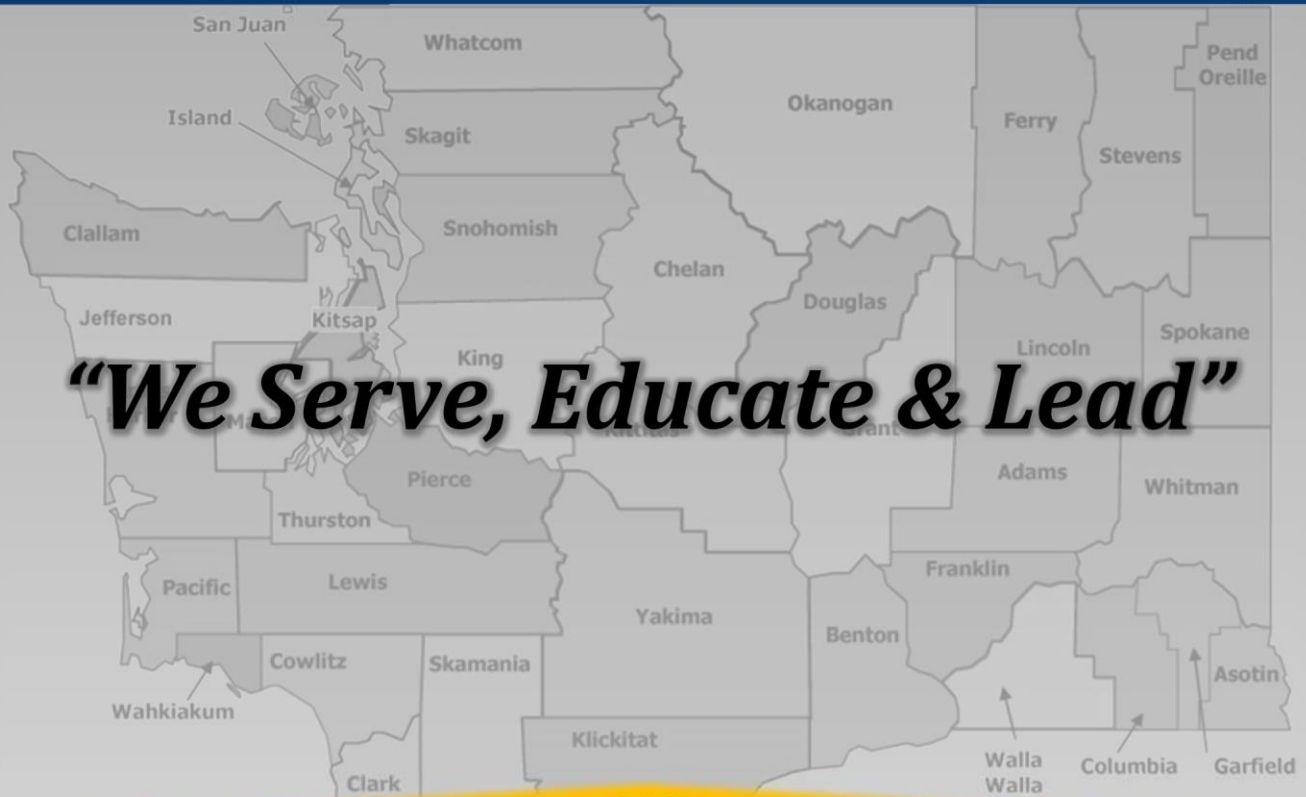
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Introduction

The Washington Fire Chiefs (WFC) is consistently working to achieve and/or maintain the highest level of professionalism and efficiency on behalf of those it serves, and thus contracted with the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) to facilitate a method to document the agency's path into the future via a "Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Plan" with the intent of meeting the goals of the WFC.

The CPSE utilized the Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning process to go beyond just the development of a document. It challenged the membership of the WFC to critically examine paradigms, values, philosophies, beliefs and desires, and challenged individuals to work in the best interest of the "team." Furthermore, it provided the membership with an opportunity to participate in the development of their organization's long-term direction and focus. Members of the agency's external and internal stakeholders' groups performed an outstanding job in committing to this important project and remain committed to the document's completion.

This strategic plan, with its foundation based in community and membership input, revisits the agency's pillars (Mission, Values, and Vision) and sets forth a continuous improvement plan that offers a road map for justifiable and sustainable future.

WASHINGTON FIRE CHIEFS STRATEGIC PLAN
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Organizational Background

The Washington Fire Chiefs is an incorporated nonprofit association. Its mission is to be a source of information and education to its members and to take a lead role in influencing issues affecting the fire service.

It is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of a President, Vice-President, Past-President, State Vice-President to the Western Fire Chiefs' Association, and eight Directors. The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice-President and one Director elected from the Board Directors. The officers are elected for one year terms, Directors are elected for two-year terms and the State Vice-President to the Western Fire Chiefs Association is elected to a three-year term. All elections are held at the Association's Annual Meeting.
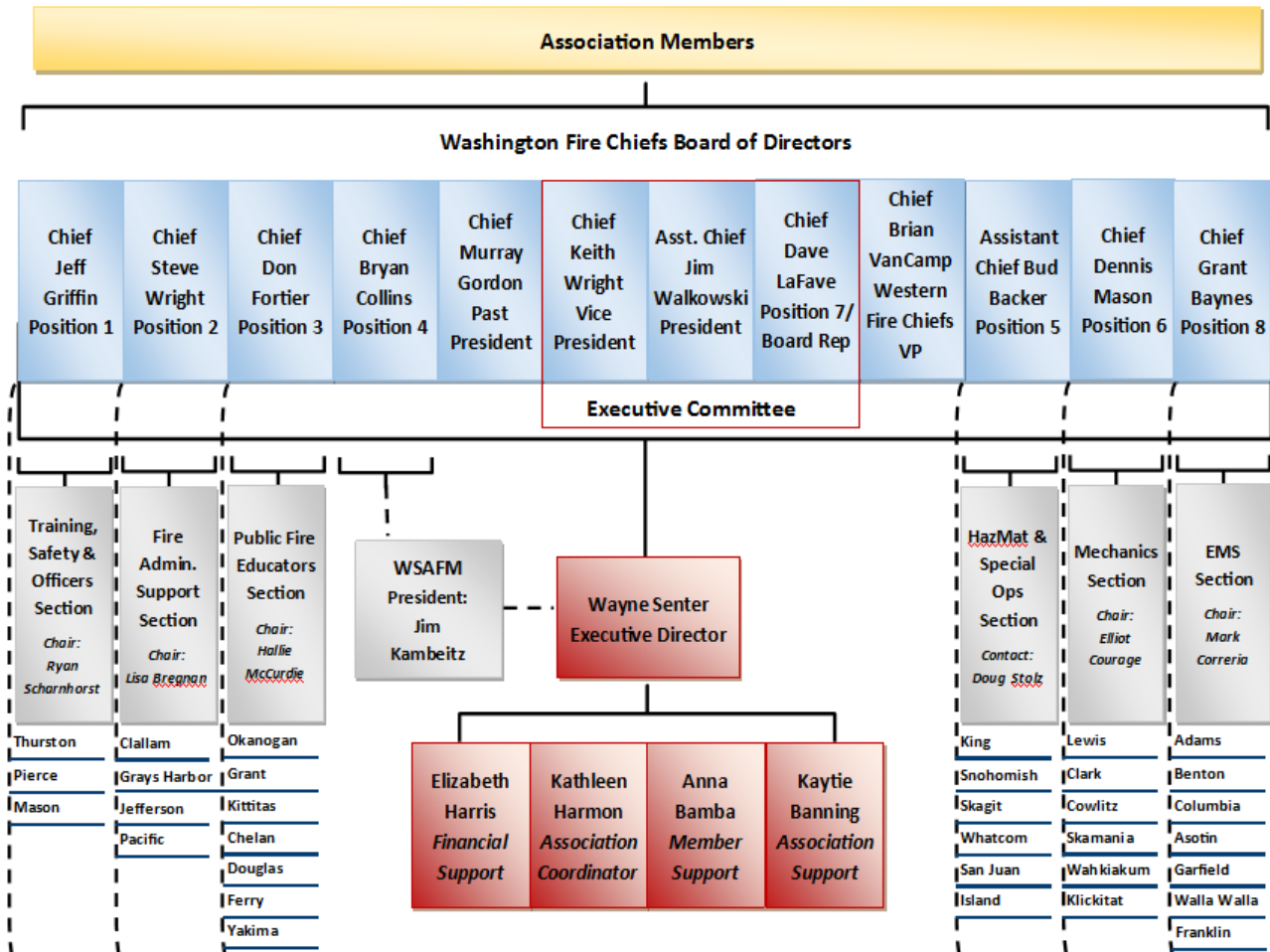
There are six major standing committees with various subcommittees under each major committee. In addition, the President appoints ad-hoc committees as necessary. The President also appoints various members to state boards and commissions to represent the Association.

There are six Sections existing under the umbrella of the Washington Fire Chiefs. These Sections are:

- Training, Safety & Officers
- Fire Mechanics
- Emergency Medical Services
- Public Fire Educators
- Fire Administrative Support
- Hazardous Materials/Special Operations

Each Section elects its own officers and Board members and operates under a set of Operating Protocols. The protocols must be consistent with the Bylaws & Policies of the Association.

Organizational Structure

Association Members

Washington Fire Chiefs Board of Directors

Chief Jeff Griffin Position 1	Chief Steve Wright Position 2	Chief Don Fortier Position 3	Chief Bryan Collins Position 4	Chief Murray Gordon Past President	Chief Keith Wright Vice President	Asst. Chief Jim Walkowski President	Chief Dave LaFave Position 7/ Board Rep	Chief Brian VanCamp Western Fire Chiefs VP	Assistant Chief Bud Backer Position 5	Chief Dennis Mason Position 6	Chief Grant Baynes Position 8

Executive Committee

Training, Safety & Officers Section
Chair: Ryan Scharnhorst

Thurston
Pierce
Mason

Fire Admin. Support Section
Chair: Lisa Bregnan

Clallam
Grays Harbor
Jefferson
Pacific

Public Fire Educators Section
Chair: Hallie McCurdie

Okanogan
Grant
Kittitas
Chelan
Douglas
Ferry
Yakima

WSAFM President: Jim Kambeitz

Wayne Senter Executive Director

Elizabeth Harris *Financial Support*	Kathleen Harmon *Association Coordinator*	Anna Bamba *Member Support*	Kaytie Banning *Association Support*

HazMat & Special Ops Section
Contact: Doug Stolz

King
Snohomish
Skagit
Whatcom
San Juan
Island

Mechanics Section
Chair: Elliot Courage

Lewis
Clark
Cowlitz
Skamania
Wahkiakum
Klickitat

EMS Section
Chair: Mark Correria

Adams
Benton
Columbia
Asotin
Garfield
Walla Walla
Franklin

Definition of a Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Plan

To ensure that the membership's needs were incorporated, the Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning process was used to develop this strategic plan. Businesses employ this type of process to identify market trends, allowing the service provider to focus resources while reducing risk and wasted effort.

What is a Strategic Plan?
It is a living management tool that:

- Provides short-term direction
- Builds a shared vision
- Sets goals and objectives
- Optimizes use of resources

> *"What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow."*
>
> Peter F. Drucker,
> Professor of Social Science
> and Management

Effective strategic planning benefits from a consistent and cohesively structured process employed across all levels of the organization. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, it is the process of planning that is important, not the publication of the plan itself. The planning process should be flexible and dynamic, with new information from association members, and life changes factored in appropriately.

Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning creates a platform for a wide range of beginnings. The approach comes to life by being shared, debated, and implemented in the context of organizational realities.

Successful organizations, from government agencies to Fortune 500 companies, have recognized that attaining customer focus is essential. Aware of this necessity, agencies must strategically plan how they will deliver high-quality services to members and partners through better, more efficient programs and processes.

Once strategic goals are established, the organization's leaders must establish performance measures, for which they are fully accountable, to assess and ensure that their departments and agencies are, indeed, delivering on the promises made in their strategic plans. Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer define strategic planning as

*a continuous and systematic process
where the guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future,
develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and
determine how success is to be measured.[1]*

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[1] Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*

The U.S. Federal Consortium Benchmarking Study Team goes on to explain that to fully understand strategic planning, it is necessary to look at a few key words in the strategic planning definition:

- **continuous** refers to the view that strategic planning must be an ongoing process, not merely an event to produce a plan;
- **systematic** recognizes that strategic planning must be a structured and deliberate effort, not something that happens on its own;
- **process** recognizes that one of the benefits of strategic planning is to undertake thinking strategically about the future and how to get there, which is much more than production of a document (e.g., a strategic plan);
- **guiding members** identifies not only senior unit executives, but also employees. (It also considers stakeholders and customers who may not make these decisions, but who affect the decisions being made.);
- **procedures and operations** means the full spectrum of actions and activities from aligning the organization behind clear long-term goals to putting in place organizational and personal incentives, allocating resources, and developing the workforce to achieve the desired outcomes; and
- **how success is to be measured** recognizes that strategic planning must use appropriate measures to determine if the organization has achieved success.

Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the management, employees, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

Where Do Stakeholders Fit into the Strategic Planning Process?

For many successful organizations, the voice of its stakeholders drives their operations and charts the course for their future. A "stakeholder-driven organization" is defined as one that

maintains a <u>focus</u> on the <u>needs and expectations</u>, both <u>spoken and unspoken</u>, of customers, both <u>present and future</u>, in the creation and/or improvement of the product or service provided.[2]

Again, it will be useful to use the U.S. Federal Consortium Benchmarking Study Team's definitions of the specific terms used in the above definition:

- **focus** means that the organization actively seeks to examine its products, services, and processes through the eyes of the customer;
- **needs and expectations** means that customers' preferences and requirements, as well as their standards for performance, timeliness, and cost, are all input to the planning for the products and services of the organization;

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[2] Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*

- **spoken and unspoken** means that not only must the expressed needs and expectations of the customers be listened to, but also that information developed independently "about" customers and their preferences, standards, and industry will be used as input to the organizational planning; and
- **present and future** recognizes that customers drive planning and operations, both to serve current customers and those who will be customers in the future.

Performance Assessment

Implied within every stage of the planning process is the ability to determine progress made toward the goals or targets set. This assessment ability is a monitoring function that simply tracks activities. It may be as simple as a "To Do List," or as complicated as a plan of action with milestones and performance measures. Also implied within the planning process is the ability to measure effectiveness of the actions taken in the conduct of the organization's business.

The Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

The specific steps of the process are as follows:

1. Define the programs provided to the stakeholders.
2. Establish the stakeholders' service program priorities.
3. Establish the stakeholders' expectations of the organization.
4. Identify any concerns the stakeholders may have about the organization.
5. Identify the aspects of the organization that the stakeholders view positively.
6. Update the Mission Statement, giving careful attention to the services and programs currently provided, and which logically can be provided in the future.
7. Update the Values of the organization's membership.
8. Identify the current Strengths of the organization.
9. Identify any current Weaknesses of the organization.
10. Identify areas of Opportunity for the organization.
11. Identify potential Threats to the organization.
12. Identify the organization's critical issues.
13. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
14. Establish realistic goals and objectives relative to the required initiatives.
15. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
16. Determine a Vision statement for the planning period.
17. Develop organizational and stakeholder commitment to accomplishing the plan.

Process and Acknowledgements

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) acknowledges the Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders for their participation and input into the Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning Process. The CPSE also recognizes the Washington Fire Chiefs Board of Directors and Executive Director Wayne Senter for the leadership and commitment to this process.

Development of the WFC strategic plan took place in December 2014, during which time representatives from the CPSE and the WFC held a two day meeting where stakeholders, were invited. These sessions served to discuss the agency's approach to the Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning, with focus on the WFC Mission and Values as well as the agency's perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Both the Washington Fire Chiefs and the Center expresses a special 'thank you' to stakeholders who contributed to the creation of this strategic plan, as it was truly a team effort. Those present at this meeting were as follows:

Table 1 Washington Fire Chiefs Stakeholders

Washington Fire Chiefs Strategic Planning Stakeholders				
Kris Alberti	Bud Backer	Grant Baynes	Russ Bong	Lisa Brengan
Steve Brooks	Mike Bucy	Jeremy Burns	Bryan Collins	Mark Correira
Elliot Courage	Lysandra Davis	Scott Dornan	Dylan Doty	Chuck Duffy
Larry Elliott	Pat Ellis	Robert Ferrell	Don Fortier	Murray Gordon
Jeff Griffin	Ed Grubbs	Kathleen Harmon	Elizabeth Harris	Shane Heston
Jeff Jensen	Jim Kambeitz	Ted Krysinski	Hallie McCurdy	Jennifer McGinnis
Brian McMahan	T.J. Nedrow	Chris Panush	Erica Reich	Michael Roesch
Trip Rumberger	Ryan Scharnhorst	Karmen Schuemann	John Sinclair	Doug Stoltz
Melanie Taylor	Bill Terhune	Brian VanCamp	Ted VanderHouwen	Jim Walkowski
John Westfall		Keith Wright		Steve Wright

Mission

A work group of the WFC stakeholders met to review the existing Mission and collectively agreed to the following.

Table 2 Proposed and Board-Accepted Mission of the Washington Fire Chiefs

Washington Fire Chiefs Mission:
-Washington Fire Chiefs- *Providing leadership through service, education and advocacy.*

Motto

The motto, as approved by the Washington Fire Chiefs board is:

Table 3 Approved Motto of the Washington Fire Chiefs

| Washington Fire Chiefs Motto: |
| --- |
| *We Serve, Educate & Lead* |

Values

Establishing values and associated statements embraced by all members of an organization is extremely important. They recognize those features and considerations that make up the personality of the organization. The Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders agreed to the following revised values:

Table 4 Proposed and Board-Accepted Values of the Washington Fire Chiefs

The Washington Fire Chiefs is committed to the values of:
• Embracing innovation
• Building collaborative relationships
• Respecting the diversity of people, sections and organizations
• Promoting accountability
• Ensuring accountability
• Ensuring responsiveness
• Establishing and maintaining effective communications
• Serving with integrity
• Providing technical guidance
• Honoring the traditions of duty, courage and public service

The Mission and Values are the foundation of this agency. Thus, every effort will be made to keep these current and meaningful so that the individuals who make up the WFC are well guided by them in the accomplishment of the goals, objectives, and day-to-day tasks.

Picture 2 Stakeholders Work Session
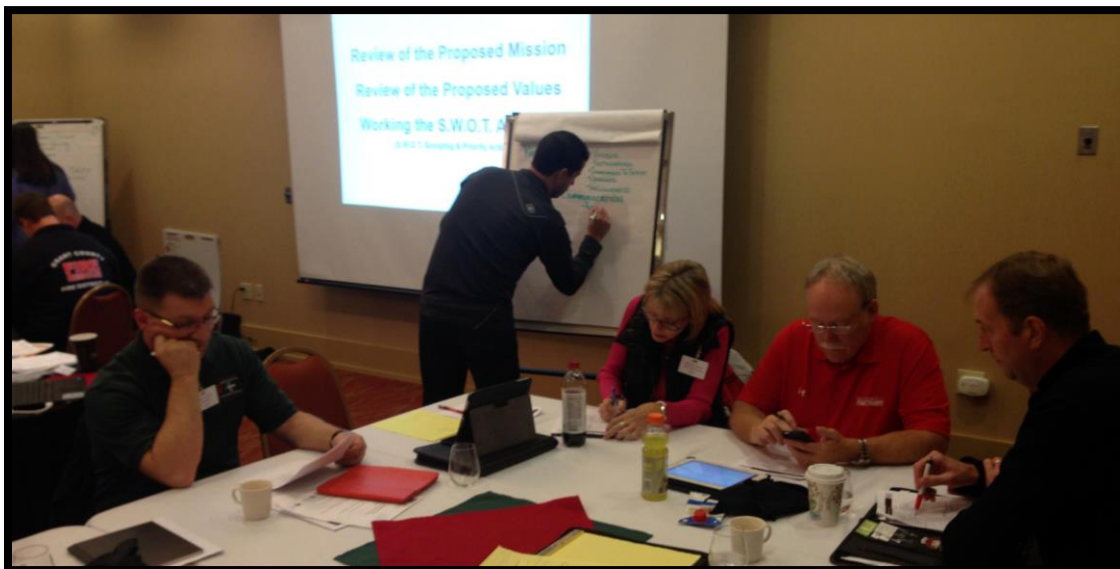
S.W.O.T. Analysis

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis is designed to have an agency candidly identify its positive and less-than-desirable attributes. The WFC participated in this activity to record their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the possible opportunities and potential threats.

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths in order to assure that it is capable of providing the services necessary for its members and partners, and to ensure that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Through a consensus process, the stakeholders identified the strengths of the WFC as follows:

Table 5 Washington Fire Chiefs Strengths

Strengths	
RELATIONSHIPS • Vendor • Networking • Commitment to serve • Openness • Inclusiveness	**IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS** • Documents • Information **INFLUENCE** • Political
RESOURCES • Educational Offerings • Experience - Organizational • Board and Administrators	**FINANCIAL** • Sustainable • Responsible • Vendor Partnership • Membership

Weaknesses

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 may function poorly or not at all. The following items were identified by the Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders as weaknesses:

Table 6 Washington Fire Chiefs Weaknesses

Weaknesses		
MEMBERSHIP • Communication • Diversity • Involvement	**ADAPTABILITY** • Technological environment • Organizational agility	**PARTNERSHIP BUILDING** • Within community served • Other fire service organizations

Opportunities

The opportunities for an organization depend on the identification of strengths and weaknesses and how they can be enhanced. The focus of opportunities is not solely on existing service, but on expanding and developing new possibilities both inside and beyond the traditional organization service area. The Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders identified the following potential opportunities:

Table 7 Washington Fire Chiefs Opportunities

Opportunities	
STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION	OUTSIDE FUNDING
CHANGING ECONOMIC CLIMATE	INNOVATION/TECHNOLOGY
HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES	

Threats

To draw strength and gain full benefit of any opportunity, the threats to the organization, with their new risks and challenges, must also be identified in the strategic planning process. By recognizing possible threats, an organization can greatly reduce the potential for loss. Fundamental to the success of any strategic plan is the understanding that threats are not completely and/or directly controlled by the organization. Some of the current and potential threats identified by the Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders were as follows:

Table 8 Washington Fire Chiefs Threats

Threats		
ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT • Limited funding • Unfunded mandates • Healthcare reform/ACA • Decreased wellness causing higher cost • Membership • Privatization	**DEMOGRAPHICS** • Recruitment and retention of volunteers • Change in labor philosophy • Multi-generational differences • Leadership vacuum • Mass exodus of the experienced	**REGULATION AND LEGISLATION** • Healthcare reform/ACA • Unfunded mandates • Political environment

Picture 3 Stakeholders Work Session

Primary Critical Issues

After reviewing the internal strengths and weaknesses along with external opportunities and threats, the Washington Fire Chiefs stakeholders identified their primary critical issues as a foundation for the development of any further goals and objectives in order to meet their strategic plan vision.

Table 9 Primary Critical Issues of the Washington Fire Chiefs

Primary Critical Issues				
Legislative	**Communications**	**Education**	**Membership**	**Relationships**
• Monitor • Influence • Protect	• Members • Web site • Tools	• Professional • Technical • Specialized • Specific	• Participation • Diversity • Value	• Fire Service • Partners • Legislative

Strategic Initiatives

Having reviewed the organization's critical issues and service gaps, the following strategic initiatives were identified to guide the agency in the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

Table 10 Strategic Initiatives of the Washington Fire Chiefs

Strategic Initiatives		
Legislative	Communications	Education
Membership		Relationships

Goals and Objectives

The Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning Process, to this point, has dealt with establishing the Mission, Values, S.W.O.T., Primary Issues and Strategic Initiatives for the WFC to focus on. In order to achieve the mission of the WFC, the accomplishment of relative goals and objectives must be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide individual members with clear direction, and address the concerns of the community. The internal stakeholders met for several hours to complete this critical phase of the planning process.

The internal stakeholders set timelines for completion of objectives supporting the goals. Leadership of the association should direct staff to periodically review progress toward these goals and objectives and report on that progress using approved performance indicators. This

> *"If you don't keep score, you're only practicing."*
>
> Vince Lombardi,
> American Football Coach and Motivator

is the time staff can recommend to the Board adjustments to timelines as needs and the environment change. This dialogue should be part of monthly Board meetings and should be captured in the association's annual report which is distributed to all stakeholders annually.

As goals are management tools, they should be updated annually by staff and approved by the Board. Each goal should support the direction identified within the strategic plan and indicate performance measurements and targets for each goal. During Board meetings, staff should identify what has been accomplished and note changes within the organization and the community. The attainment of a performance target should be recognized and celebrated to provide a sense of organizational accomplishment.

The objectives developed by staff should directly support the approved strategic goals and indicate specifically which goal is supported by each objective. Accomplishing these objectives, which are linked to the goals, now become the focus for staff to complete within the stated timelines. By following these goals and objectives carefully, the organization is directed into its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way.

Table 11 Washington Fire Chiefs Goals

	The goals of the Washington Fire Chiefs are to:
Goal 1	Strengthen and improve internal relationships with our members as measured by a reduction of distracting conflict and increased interest based problem solving resulting in improved outcomes.
Goal 2	Build on existing legislative relationships to maximize influence in the legislative process as measured by our effectiveness on a collective fire service agenda.
Goal 3	Strengthen and improve external fire partnership relationships, especially the WFCA, WSFFA, WSCFF, DNR, Military Department-EMD, and WSP as measured by feedback from Board members and staff from those organizations.
Goal 4	Increase proactive communication and contact with members on critical issues as measured by feedback from the county chief organizations.
Goal 5	Strengthen support staff relationships and office systems in an environment that is positive and continues to meet the needs of our customers as measured by staff/customer feedback during six month and annual reviews.
Goal 6	Increase involvement and participation of our members in the strategic plan development and the execution of that collaborative document as measured by post development surveys.
Goal 7	Increase membership values in the eyes of current and potential members as measured by membership recruitment and retention data.
Goal 8	Increase revenues through partnerships with vendors, fire service partners and the Fire Rescue Wellness Corporation as measured against historic annual revenues.
Goal 9	Continue to be the premier resource fire chief's use when they are facing a crisis within their agency or region as measured by documenting the contacts and outcomes.

Goal 10	Serve, Educate and Lead by being mission driven, goal oriented, using good character and Omega Style Leadership (proficiency, action and relationships.)

Vision

On the final day of the process, a WFC stakeholder caucus group presented the WFC a draft vision of where the agency could be in the future should it apply effort in the strategic initiatives and goals identified in this process. This vision provides a target of excellence that the organization will strive toward in this planning period, and provide a basis for its goals and objectives.

Table 12 Washington Fire Chiefs Vision

The Washington Fire Chiefs vision is to be an organization where:
• Our state based focus provides high quality services that are responsive to the changing needs of our members and external agencies.
• We can create an environment that provides open, timely and relevant communication both internally and externally.
• Legislative advocacy will be a primary focus.
• High quality education and professional development meets the diverse needs of our agencies.
• We value each other, the members we serve, and our commitment to the Washington Fire Chiefs Mission.

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