



TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION
AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
FISCAL YEARS 2015-2019

<u>Commission Members</u>	<u>Dates of Term</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Steven C. Tull, Presiding Officer	2009-2015	Valley Mills
Elroy Carson	2011-2017	Ransom Canyon
Pat Ekiss	2012-2017	Taylor
Yusuf Elias Farran	2009-2015	El Paso
Carl "Gene" Giles	2009-2015	Carthage
John K. Gillette III, Secretary	2011-2017	Frisco
Jody Gonzalez, Asst. Presiding Officer	2013-2019	Denton
John W. Green	2011-2017	San Leon
Joseph Gutheinz, Jr.	2013-2019	Pearland
John McMakin	2013-2019	LaRue
Robert Moore	2012-2015	Bryan
Leonardo "Lenny" Perez	2013-2019	Brownsville
Ron Poynter	2012-2015	McKinney

Submitted June 23, 2014

Signed: 
Executive Director

Approved: 
Presiding Officer

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STATEWIDE VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY

From Strengthening Our Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, March 2014.

VISION

Working together, I am confident we can address the priorities of our citizens with the limited-government principles and responsible governance they demand. We are committed to ensuring that this state continues to shine as a bright star for opportunity and prosperity for all Texans. We must critically examine the role of state government by identifying the core programs and activities necessary for the long-term economic health of our state, while eliminating outdated and inefficient functions. We must continue to adhere to the priorities that have made Texas a national economic leader by:

- ensuring the economic competitiveness of our state by adhering to principles of fiscal discipline, setting clear budget priorities, living within our means, and limiting the growth of government;
- investing in critical water, energy, and transportation infrastructure needs to meet the demands of our rapidly growing state;
- ensuring excellence and accountability in public schools and institutions of higher education as we invest in the future of this state and make sure Texans are prepared to compete in the global marketplace;
- defending Texans by safeguarding our neighborhoods and protecting our international border; and
- increasing transparency and efficiency at all levels of government to guard against waste, fraud and abuse, ensuring that Texas taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money to keep our economy and our families strong.

MISSION

Texas state government must be limited, efficient, and completely accountable. It should foster opportunity and economic prosperity, focus on critical priorities, and support the creation of strong family environments for our children. The stewards of the public trust must be men and women who administer state government in a fair, just, and responsible manner. To honor the public trust, state officials must seek new and innovative ways to meet state government priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

PHILOSOPHY

The task before all state public servants is to govern in a manner worthy of this great state. We are a great enterprise, and as an enterprise, we will promote the following core principles:

- First and foremost, Texas matters most. This is the overarching, guiding principle by which we will make decisions. Our state, and its future, is more important than party, politics, or individual recognition.
- Government should be limited in size and mission, but it must be highly effective in performing the tasks it undertakes.
- Decisions affecting individual Texans, in most instances, are best made by those individuals, their families, and the local government closest to their communities.
- Competition is the greatest incentive for achievement and excellence. It inspires ingenuity and requires individuals to set their sights high. Just as competition inspires excellence, a sense of personal responsibility drives individual citizens to do more for their future and the future of those they love.
- Public administration must be open and honest, pursuing the high road rather than the expedient course. We must be accountable to taxpayers for our actions.
- State government has a responsibility to safeguard taxpayer dollars by eliminating waste and abuse, and providing efficient and honest government.

Finally, state government should be humble, recognizing that all its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection has a direct or indirect impact on the following statewide goals and benchmarks from *Strengthening Our Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, March 2014*.

EDUCATION—PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Priority Goal: To ensure that all students in the public education system acquire the knowledge and skills to be responsible and independent Texans by: Ensuring students graduate from high school and have the skills necessary to pursue any option including attending a university, a two-year institution, or other post-secondary training, serving in the military, or entering the workforce; ensuring students learn English, math, science and social studies skills at the appropriate grade level through graduation; and demonstrating exemplary performance in foundation subjects.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Percentage of Texas high school students graduating with six hours or more of college credit.
- Percentage of students who are awarded a technical certification upon completion of high school.

The commission encourages programs established by community colleges and other approved training providers that extend certification training programs into targeted high schools. Students completing these programs often earn college credit, and may eventually apply for commission certification upon attainment of any additional state requirements.

EDUCATION—HIGHER EDUCATION

Priority Goal: To prepare individuals for a changing economy and workforce by: providing an affordable, accessible, and quality system of higher education; and furthering the development and application of knowledge through teaching, research, and commercialization.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Percentage of population age 24 years and older with vocational/technical certificate as highest level of education attainment.
- Percentage of population age 24 years and older with two-year college degree as highest level of education attainment.
- Percentage of population age 24 years and older with four-year college degree as highest level of educational attainment.
- Percentage of two-year college students who transfer to four-year institutions.

- Percentage of two-year transfer students who graduate from four-year institutions.

The commission establishes minimum curriculum requirements and serves as the state’s approval authority for all fire safety training programs leading to state certification. With input from the fire fighter advisory committee and the curriculum and testing committee, the commission works closely with local government agencies, universities, colleges and other institutions in the development of training and education programs for fire protection personnel. Additionally, the agency provides incentives for students to further their higher education by allowing certain lower and upper division credit to be used toward professional development certifications offered by the agency.

Through its resource library, the commission provides resources for research by instructors and audiovisual materials to be used as training aids.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Priority Goal: To provide an attractive economic climate for current and emerging industries and market Texas as a premier business expansion and tourist destination that fosters economic opportunity, job creation, and capital investment by: promoting a favorable business climate and a fair system to fund necessary state services; addressing transportation needs; maintaining economic competitiveness as a key priority in setting state policy; and developing a well-trained, educated, and productive workforce.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Per capita gross state product.
- Percentage of adult education students who are awarded a technical certification.
- Texas unemployment rate.
- Median household income.

Fire has an enormous impact on the state’s economic well-being. In 2012 (the most current year available), Texas incurred \$480,869,446 in direct property losses due to fires, according to the Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS). The indirect costs to the economy are enormous.

The commission’s mission statement directly addresses the economic development and stability of the state. Developing and enforcing professional standards ensures that the capabilities and assets of the regulated fire service in Texas are adequately maintained, therefore providing the protection needed by businesses and property owners. Assisting local governments is another way the commission participates in the process of providing the citizens of Texas with the ability to implement a front-line defense against fires and related hazards.

The attainment of various certifications offered by the commission positively impacts individuals by increasing their marketability and earning potential.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Priority Goal: To protect Texans by: preventing and reducing terrorism and crime; securing the Texas/Mexico border from all threats; achieving an optimum level of statewide preparedness capable of responding and recovering from all hazards; and confining, supervising, and rehabilitating offenders.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Number of emergency incidents coordinated or supported.
- Percent of state's population whose local officials and emergency responders have completed a training/exercise program in the last year.

As a member of the State Emergency Management Council, the commission assists with the general operating procedures of the State Operations Center (SOC) during statewide emergencies and disasters.

The commission is also a member of Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS). This group was created to provide for the systematic mobilization, deployment, organization and management of local Texas fire-related resources in order to provide assistance in mitigating the effect of emergencies and disasters throughout Texas.

Through its resource library, the commission provides educational and instructional materials to assist fire departments with training in preparation for emergency/disaster situations. Through its certification and testing programs, the commission validates the professional development activities of first responders, particularly in the areas of fire, hazardous materials, and rescue services. These programs are ever expanding to meet the needs associated with protecting Texans from any hazard that may strike the state, whether natural or man-made. The commission coordinates with other public safety stakeholders in the development of these programs.

REGULATORY

Priority Goal: To ensure Texans are effectively and efficiently served by high-quality professionals and businesses by: implementing clear standards; ensuring compliance; establishing market-based solutions; and reducing the regulatory burden on people and business.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Percent of state professional licensee population with no documented violations.
- Percent of new professional licensees as compared to the existing population.
- Percent of documented complaints to professional licensing agencies resolved within six months.
- Number of utilization reviews conducted for treatment of occupational injuries.
- Percent of individuals given a test for professional licensure who received a passing score.

- Percentage of new and renewed professional licenses issued online.

The commission maintains an active program for inspection of regulated entities to ensure compliance with established standards for such things as: purchase, care, and maintenance of protective equipment used by emergency response personnel; procedures used at emergency incidents; continuing education; training; and personnel wellness-fitness. The fact that non-compliance with commission rules may subject a fire protection entity to warnings, administrative penalties, or other disciplinary actions tends to minimize the number of violations encountered by agency personnel during inspections.

Approximately 250 facilities are approved by the commission to deliver certification training. These facilities include fire departments, community colleges, and private training providers. These facilities serve both fire protection entities and individuals by offering training in 13 different disciplines. This availability of training creates exceptional opportunity for potential new certificate holders.

The commission has adopted rules for handling complaints filed with or about the agency in a timely and efficient manner.

With the passage of Senate Bill 1011, 81(R), the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's sunset legislation, the agency is required to collect and track personnel injury data and develop recommendations for reducing those injuries. These recommendations are then submitted to the State Fire Marshal's Office for inclusion in its annual line of duty death report.

The commission closely tracks statistical data related to state certification examination scores. This includes both average scores and pass rate. . . The average pass rate on state exams is currently a key performance measure for the commission.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Priority Goal: To provide citizens with greater access to government services while reducing service delivery costs and protecting the fiscal resources for current and future taxpayers by: supporting effective, efficient and accountable state government operations; ensuring the state's bonds attain the highest possible bond rating; and conservatively managing the state's debt.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Total state spending per capita.
- Number of state employees per 10,000 population.
- Number of state services accessible by Internet.
- Total savings realized in state spending by making reports/documents/processes available on the Internet and accepting information in electronic format.

The commission strives to accomplish its statutory mandates and fulfill its goals in the most efficient and cost-effective ways possible.

The commission expects to utilize its recent Customer Satisfaction Survey to implement customer suggestions that will result in more efficient procedures. The Customer Satisfaction Survey is an example of the commission's attempt to respond to required activities in the most economical way possible.

The commission continues to develop web-based systems for delivery of information and services to both the fire service and the general public, and considers this project to be a priority for the immediate future. Several new features of the online interface between the agency and regulated fire service entities and individuals have been launched in the past year. Examples include online certification renewal, payments for certain fees (with all payments eventually being made this way), and processing of training approval submissions. Other online functions are under development or nearing completion. The goal is to transition to a system whereby the majority of business and informational transactions between the commission and its customers occurs online. The completion of this transition will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service and information delivery.

AGENCY MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

The mission of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is to aid in the protection of lives and property of Texas citizens, through the development and enforcement of recognized professional standards for individuals and the fire service.

PHILOSOPHY

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection acts in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, accountability, efficiency, transparency, skill, and integrity. We believe the responsibility for providing protection from fire and other hazards that threaten the public safety is a cooperative effort among this commission, citizens, and all branches of the fire service, local government and other state agencies. The agency administers its statutory responsibilities, professional standards and duties, in a fair, just and responsible manner.

EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

AGENCY OVERVIEW

STATUTORY BASIS AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection Personnel Standards and Education was created in 1969 by the 61st Legislature. The authority for the commission was originally codified as Article 4413(35), V.T.C.S.

In 1991, Senate Bill 383 72(R) merged the Texas Commission on Fire Protection Personnel Standards and Education with the State Fire Marshal's Office and the Key Rate Section, which were administered by the Texas Department of Insurance. The legislation also assigned the Fire Department Emergency Board (formerly an adjunct of the State Fire Marshal's Office) to the expanded Texas Commission on Fire Protection. The functions of the Fire Department Emergency Board were authorized in 1989 under constitutional amendment House Joint Resolution 33. The emergency board was originally established under House Bill 708, 71st Legislature, to provide grants, loans and scholarships to fire departments for fire protection training, equipment and facilities. A study by the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission during the 72nd Legislative Session concluded that the commission should have additional authority in the form of a volunteer standards and certification program.

In 1993, Senate Bill 1110 73(R) revised several key areas in the commission's statutes. The bill delineated distinctions between volunteer, part-paid and full-paid fire departments and fire fighters, provided a "bridge" to allow volunteer fire fighters to become paid fire fighters, and required that entities providing fire protection to local governments for profit comply with commission regulations.

In 1997, during the 75th Legislative Session, the commission was subject to review by the Sunset Advisory Commission. Senate Bill 371, the commission's sunset legislation, revised the commission's scope. Among the changes enacted was the return of the State Fire Marshal's Office to the Texas Department of Insurance. SB 371 also abolished the commission's authority to conduct key rate inspections, in response to the Texas Department of Insurance's 1997 repeal of the key rate system in Texas (TDI replaced the key rate system with the Insurance Services Office's *Fire Suppression Rating Schedule*). Additionally, SB 371 transferred the agency's engineering assistance program, which was designed to assist fire departments with the transition to the *Fire Suppression Rating Schedule*, to TDI. The commission's sunset legislation allowed the fire department emergency program to remain with the agency.

In 2001, Senate Bill 382 77(R) refined several areas of the commission's statute relative to fire fighter safety. The bill addressed personal protective equipment and self-contained breathing apparatus, requiring departments to develop and maintain standard operating procedures covering the proper use, selection, care and maintenance of all protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus. The bill also required fire departments to provide all personnel with a personal alert safety system.

Additionally, the bill required departments to develop standard operating procedures, based upon National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, implementing an incident management system, a personnel accountability system and addressing fire protection personnel operating at emergency incidents.

In 2005, Senate Bill 879 79(R) deleted obsolete language and gave the commission the right to make non-substantive clerical changes to its rules without review by the fire fighter advisory committee. In addition, the bill added a requirement that all fire departments seeking funding from the Fire Department Emergency Program must routinely and consistently report incidents to the Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS) and participate in the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

In 2009, SB 1011 81(R), the Texas Commission on Fire Protection's sunset legislation, extended the agency through 2021. The bill requires the agency to:

- Use alternative dispute resolution procedures to assist in the resolution of internal and external disputes under the agency's jurisdiction.
- Maintain a complaint tracking system.
- Use appropriate technological solutions to ensure that the public is able to interact with the agency on the Internet.
- Conduct fingerprint-based criminal history checks on all initial applications for certification.
- Conduct risk-based inspections of institutions and facilities providing training for fire protection personnel as well as fire departments that provide fire protection to local governments.
- Collect and track personnel injury data to reduce fire protection personnel injuries.
- Cooperate with federal and state entities when a disaster is declared in the state.

Also included in the bill was the transfer of the Fire Department Emergency Program and all funds appropriated for the program to the Texas Forest Service.

In 2011, the 82nd Legislature through its appropriation process made the Texas Commission on Fire Protection a self-funded agency. The agency now generates its funding primarily through revenue collected from examinations and certification fees.

In 2013, the 83rd Legislature proposed several bills which would have administratively attached the commission to another state agency. Agencies identified included the Texas Department of Insurance, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and the Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) of the Texas A&M University System. Ultimately none of the bills passed, but with the encouragement and participation of its stakeholders, the commission elected to conduct a study regarding the feasibility of administrative attachment. The goal is to have the study completed and a report provided to the 84th legislature when it convenes in January 2015.

AFFECTED POPULATIONS

The commission regulates 667 entities. It is estimated that there are approximately 1,500 volunteer fire departments in Texas. Volunteer fire departments do not typically fall under the regulatory responsibilities of the commission, but current statutes allow them to choose to become regulated if they so desire. All volunteer fire departments, whether regulated or not, are also able to utilize commission resources such as the Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library. These departments are also encouraged to participate in the commission's injury reporting program.

Recent estimates indicate that the Texas fire service consists of approximately 50,000 to 60,000 fire protection personnel, of which about 30,000 are subject to commission certification requirements. Approximately 23,000 fire protection personnel are associated with the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas (SFFMA), a trade association for the state's volunteer fire service. The remaining personnel are not regulated by the commission nor associated with the SFFMA, thus making an accurate count difficult.

FIRE IN TEXAS

Information regarding fires in Texas is primarily compiled through the Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS), which is administered by the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO). The SFMO is a division of the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI). TEXFIRS statistical data is forwarded to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

Participation by Texas fire departments in TEXFIRS is voluntary. In 2012, 1,007 fire departments reported 71,303 fires, an average of a fire every seven minutes. The information below is derived from TEXFIRS and NFIRS annual reports.

In 2012, there were 1,766,555 fire and non-fire incidents reported to TEXFIRS. These fires resulted in 174 civilian deaths, 744 civilian fire injuries, and \$480,869,446 in property loss. Cooking was the most frequently (29%) identified cause in all residential structure fires and most fire-related civilian deaths (67%) occurred in residential structure fires.

FIRE FIGHTER INJURIES AND CASUALTIES

One of the commission's main priorities is to ensure the safety of the state's fire service personnel. The commission accomplishes this goal primarily by establishing education and training standards for fire fighter certification and by enforcing standards for protective clothing, breathing apparatus, emergency procedures, and fire fighter health and wellness.

On September 1, 2001, the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) became responsible for investigating all line-of-duty deaths (LODDs) involving fire service personnel in Texas. The Texas Commission on Fire Protection assists the SFMO with these investigations. When requested, the agency provides expertise by inspecting protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus involved in LODD incidents to ascertain compliance with applicable National Fire Protection Association standards and state statutes. The agency also inspects training records and standard operating procedures for compliance with state statutes.

On September 1, 2009, the Texas Commission on Fire Protection became responsible for gathering and evaluating information and data on fire protection personnel injuries and developing recommendations for reducing injuries. Regulated entities are required to report injuries to the commission via the online reporting module developed for this purpose. The commission forwards its report and recommendations to the SFMO for inclusion in the fire marshal's annual report.

The commission tracks trends in the injuries reported and performs two key functions in the reduction of injuries, including:

- Providing statistical data and reporting trends to fire departments. This encourages local action to minimize unintended or unsafe acts. The commission may assign personnel to assist departments with the analysis of injury events upon request. With the permission of the affected department, the commission shares these reports with fire service stakeholders to encourage a review of current practices and lessons learned.
- Additionally, by gathering and analyzing injury data, the commission may identify hazards associated with personal protective equipment that may be defective, not meeting standards, or is no longer compliant with adopted and recognized standards. The commission notifies departments whenever it identifies these issues.

The commission has mandated participation in the National Fallen Firefighter Foundation's "Courage to Be Safe So Everyone Goes Home" program in the form of required continuing education for all regulated personnel. This program identifies steps that fire fighters and fire protection entities can incorporate into everyday activities to not only reduce the number of injuries associated with fire protection activities, but to change the culture of the fire service toward a more safety-conscious mindset. The State of Texas was the first in the nation to adopt this program as a requirement for its regulated personnel.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection's enabling legislation has created a state government entity that is uniquely responsive to the public it serves. To a large extent the commission's rulemaking process is guided by representatives of the entities that the commission regulates. A majority of members of the commission are required to be active members of the fire service who serve and represent specific constituencies within the fire protection community, while addressing the fire protection needs of the state as a whole. In 1997, Senate Bill 371 modified the rulemaking body to include three public members, and in 2003, Senate Bill 287 added another public member, for a total of four. These public members represent all citizens affected by fire and other hazards in Texas.

In addition to the majority of commissioners, the members of the statutorily created fire fighter advisory committee (FFAC) also come from the fire service. Except on rare occasions, rule recommendations that come before the commission for approval are drafted by the FFAC. The FFAC drafts and recommends rule proposals according to the needs of the general public and the Texas fire service. By law, the commission cannot make substantive changes to rule language without the FFAC's prior review.

With regard to the public's "perception" of the agency, the term "fire protection" sometimes implies a much broader range of responsibilities than those that fall within the commission's statutory authority. The commission's scope is limited to:

- Providing educational resources and support to the fire service and public.
- Developing and enforcing standards regarding training, testing, certification, and appointment of fire protection personnel.
- Developing and enforcing standards regarding protective clothing and equipment worn by fire protection personnel.
- Developing and enforcing standards regarding certain procedures and practices used at emergency incidents; and certain programs adopted by fire departments.
- Collecting fire service personnel injury data and reporting the results annually.

The commission's authority does not include other aspects of fire protection, such as:

- Inspection of fire station facilities.
- Inspection of fire apparatus.
- Inspection of a community's water supply.
- Investigation of fire service line-of-duty deaths. (The commission does provide limited assistance the State Fire Marshal's Office with this task when requested.)
- Regulation of volunteer fire departments. (However, statute does allow a volunteer department to become regulated voluntarily.)

A continuing challenge is that even many regulated fire protection personnel are relatively unfamiliar with what the agency does (or does not) do, how it provides its services, or even what it requires of regulated organizations and individuals. This may be due to:

- The fact that the agency corresponds primarily with fire protection entities (fire departments, training facilities, fire marshal offices, etc.). Members of those entities sometimes know very little about the agency because their employer manages regulatory business on their behalf. The advent of the commission's web-based portal has helped this to some degree, in that it allows individuals to create and maintain their own accounts and handle many interactions with the agency themselves.
- The potentially confusing construction of rules adopted by the commission for functions such as testing, certification, continuing education, etc. To combat this, the commission works to provide simplified explanations of rules and processes whenever possible.

- The potential difficulty in navigating the commission’s website. The agency makes a tremendous amount of information available on its website, which as a result requires some degree of patience and persistence on the part of the user to obtain the information desired. The website is continually reviewed by staff to consider ways to improve its design and function, while still maintaining compliance with state government guidelines for agency websites.

This unfamiliarity with the commission’s role, rules and processes ultimately results in a steady volume of phone calls from the public and from fire service personnel who have not been able to obtain the information needed from the agency’s website, are confused by what they have read, or simply don’t know where to begin. Although top-notch customer service is a high priority for the organization, the volume of phone traffic is a continual challenge for staff, and does result in a certain level of frustration on the part of some callers.

ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS

WORKFORCE/HUMAN RESOURCES (SEE APPENDIX E)

POLICYMAKING STRUCTURE

The policymaking body of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is a 13-member board of commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The members of the commission represent a broad spectrum of the Texas fire service:

- Two members are chief officers nominated by the Texas Fire Chiefs’ Association. One of the fire chiefs must be the head of his or her fire department, and one must be employed by a political subdivision with a population of less than 100,000.
- Two members are paid fire protection personnel nominated by the Texas State Association of Fire Fighters. These fire fighters must hold a rank of battalion chief or below, and one must be employed by a political subdivision with a population of less than 100,000.
- Two members are volunteer fire chiefs or volunteer fire fighters nominated by the State Firemen’s and Fire Marshals’ Association of Texas.
- One member is a certified fire protection engineer.
- One member is a certified arson investigator or certified fire protection inspector.
- One member is a fire protection instructor from an institution of higher education.
- Four are public members.

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The commission is assisted in its policymaking responsibilities by the fire fighter advisory committee, the curriculum and testing committee, and ad hoc committees.

The **fire fighter advisory committee** consists of nine members, six of whom must be fire protection personnel or retired fire protection personnel who collectively represent various areas in the field of fire protection. Three members of the committee must be certified instructors of fire protection personnel, and at least one member of the committee must be a volunteer fire fighter or volunteer fire chief. The committee periodically reviews commission rules relating to fire protection personnel, fire departments, and other fire fighters and fire fighting organizations and recommends changes in the rules to the commission.

The **curriculum and testing committee** was created and appointed by the commission to periodically review and recommend changes to the commission's curricula, certification examinations and training programs. Members of the curriculum and testing committee are nominated by the fire fighter advisory committee and are appointed by the commission.

Ad hoc committees are created to assist with specific, limited-duration tasks, such as creating or updating new curricula and test banks for new certifications. Ad hoc committees are typically composed of subject matter experts in specific disciplines.

STAFF STRUCTURE AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Under the direction of an executive director appointed by the commission, the staff of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection implements and enforces the commission's adopted rules. The commission is authorized 31 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in the following functional areas: the executive office, certification and professional development, training approval and testing, compliance, information resources, financial services, and public information. Supervisors over each of the functional areas report directly to the executive director.

The **executive office** supports the activities of the executive director. The director develops and implements agency policies as required by statute; plans, directs, and coordinates programs and resources of the agency; and develops and executes the agency operating budget and procedures. The human resource functions of the agency also fall under the executive office. The **certification and professional development section** manages the issuance of initial and higher level state certifications, administers the annual certification renewal program, performs audits of continuing education, and oversees the activities surrounding development and maintenance of training curricula and test question banks. The **training approval and testing section** oversees approval of certification training courses, administers the commission's state certification examination process, and audits training programs in progress. The **compliance section** performs inspections of regulated fire protection entities to ensure compliance with established codes and statutes, assists the testing section in the administration of state exams, tracks and investigates complaints, and assists the State Fire Marshal's Office with line of duty death investigations. The **information technology section** provides information technology and network support to all agency sections

and functions, and develops and maintains software programs used by the agency. The **financial services section** provides internal support to the agency, including accounting, budgeting, purchasing and other staff service functions. The **public information section** maintains the agency website, provides liaison services to the media and public, administers the agency's injury reporting program, and manages the agency's resource and reference library.

In 2013, commission personnel:

- Renewed the certifications of 28,855 fire protection personnel.
- Performed 717 inspections or investigations of regulated entities.
- Evaluated 1,108 fire service training programs.
- Administered 8,507 certification examinations.
- Conducted 2,040 criminal background checks.
- Issued 13,470 new fire protection personnel certificates.
- Issued 4,723 IFSAC seals to qualified individuals.

The commission sets standards and certifies fire protection personnel in basic, intermediate, advanced, and master levels of the following disciplines:

- Structural Fire Protection
- Aircraft Rescue Fire Protection
- Marine Fire Protection
- Fire Inspector
- Arson Investigator
- Fire Investigator

The commission also sets the minimum standards and issues certification to qualified persons in these disciplines:

- Head of Department
- Hazardous Materials: Technician and Incident Commander
- Driver/Operator – Pumper
- Fire Officer I, II, III, and IV
- Fire Instructor: Level I, Level II, Level III, and Level III-Master

- Incident Safety Officer
- Wildland Fire Protection: Basic and Intermediate

Minimum standards for fire protection personnel certification exceed those of many other states. Texas certification standards are developed through an in-depth collaborative process involving staff, advisory committees, and the commission.

The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) has accredited several of the commission's testing processes for certification. Personnel who successfully complete an accredited testing process may qualify for additional credentialing over and above state certification. IFSAC teams perform site visits and inspect the commission's program every five years to ensure continued compliance with IFSAC rules and guidelines.

ERNEST A. EMERSON FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCE LIBRARY

The commission's Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library is important not only to the commission's work in setting standards to ensure the safety of the state's fire protection personnel, but also in providing a valuable resource for the commission's fire service customers and the general public. It does this by providing resources for fire protection research and by providing educational materials to fire departments and fire department personnel, as well as to the commission staff and advisory committees.

The goal of the Emerson Library is to provide quality training and research materials and services. The librarian on staff provides research and reference services to anyone. The librarian coordinates the dissemination of agency and library information with commission staff via the commission's communications and online initiatives.

The Emerson Library's recent resource and reference collection development has focused on bringing the collection up to date, addressing commission curriculum and certification initiatives, and identifying "hot topics" facing the Texas fire service. New outreach initiatives, including newsletters, collaborative work with stakeholders, and social media marketing, have broadened the library's reach.

One challenge facing the library is the limited financial ability of the agency to upgrade library resources to the degree desired. Purchasing and upgrading reference material, videos, and other training resources is expensive, and can only be addressed in a limited manner.

Another challenge is in "marketing" the library and its resources to the fire service and general population. The agency has found that many fire departments, particularly volunteer organizations, are not aware that the Emerson Library's materials are available. Additionally, although the library contains a great deal of valuable information, individuals doing research on the web have access to a nearly unlimited amount of information from a vast number of sources. As such, the Emerson Library becomes simply one of many potential sources of information from which to choose. Finally, even some of the smallest fire departments today often make the decision to purchase their own education materials for in-house training. A priority for the immediate future will be to find additional avenues for marketing the Emerson Library to the fire service community and beyond.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS

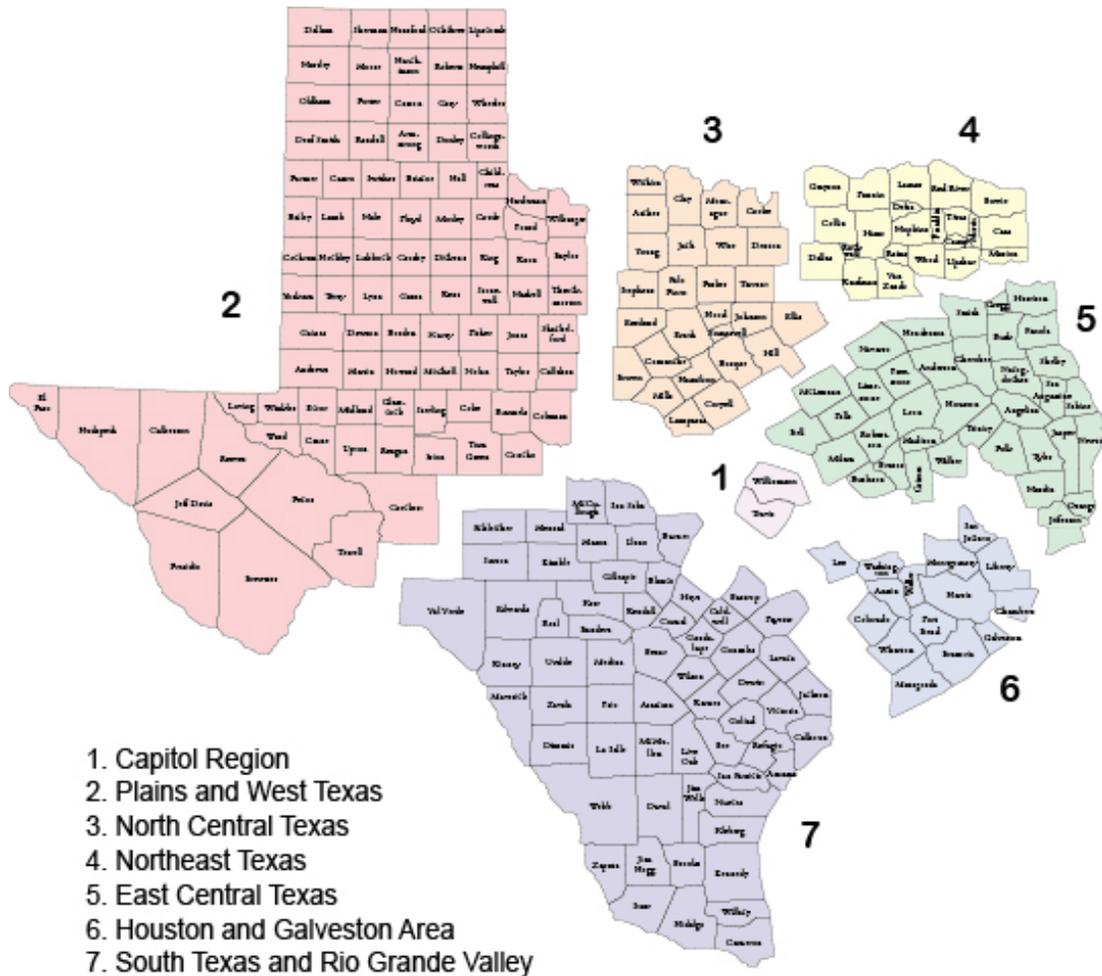
HEADQUARTERS

PHYSICAL ADDRESS

1701 N. Congress Ave., Suite 1-105
Austin, Texas 78701

MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 2286
Austin, TX 78768-2286
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The commission has seven regional offices throughout Texas. With the exception of the Austin office, the agency has moved its regional officers out of commercial or governmental office spaces

and into home offices. This has resulted in cost savings and increased efficiency for regional operations, and has alleviated the challenge and uncertainty the agency faces with regard to rented or otherwise procured space for its personnel.

The regional distribution of field offices is based on the number and distribution of fire departments and other regulated entities in each region. The commission inspects each regulated entity once every two years. Although the number of departments is important in determining the geographic regions, more critical determining factors are the size of the departments and activity levels in each region. For example, the Houston Fire Department, the third-largest fire department in the nation, takes substantially more time and resources to inspect than any other Texas department. Several compliance officers travel from their respective regions to the state's larger departments when the biennial inspections of those departments occur. Regional boundaries are re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure even distribution of the workload across the state and to maintain optimum levels of customer interaction and service.

Due to budget cuts over the past several legislative sessions, the Capitol region inspection workload is currently being performed by the other regional officers. (The Capitol region FTE position was reassigned to another function in the agency in order to meet newly mandated responsibilities.) The commission hopes to regain the lost regional FTE through the appropriations request process in the near future.

Per Chapter 419 of the Texas Government Code, the agency may conduct risk-based inspections in addition to its regularly scheduled biennial inspections. The agency may investigate or conduct a follow-up inspection on a recurring issue, or to assist a fire department in achieving compliance with commission rules. Additionally, an inspection resulting from a complaint would be considered a risk-based inspection. These inspections typically cannot be planned or strategically scheduled.

The regional offices also perform outreach and educational activities to both the regulated and non-regulated fire service in order to:

- Educate and inform regulated and non-regulated entities about the agency's regulatory functions and requirements.
- Educate and inform regulated and non-regulated entities about the reason for the particular regulatory requirements, i.e. to keep fire fighters safe and therefore protect the citizens of the State of Texas.
- Notify fire departments of hazards associated with personal protective equipment that may be defective, not meeting standards, or is no longer compliant with adopted and recognized standards.
- Educate the fire service community on reducing fire protection personnel injuries revealed from the information and data collected.

As urban areas of the state continue to grow and expand, formerly rural areas are quickly becoming suburban in nature. Many of these rural areas have been ably served for many years by volunteer departments not falling under the regulatory authority of the commission. However, as the population grows and development increases in these areas, the departments are often faced with

the challenge of transitioning from all-volunteer status to “combination” (part-paid and part-volunteer) or all-paid status. When these departments hire paid fire protection personnel, they may become subject to the commission’s regulations and requirements. To their credit, many of these departments proactively contact the commission prior to such a transition to request guidance and assistance with the anticipated change. The commission works closely and cooperatively with these transitioning departments so that the process can go as smoothly as possible. The process of bringing a new department into compliance with state regulations often requires informational meetings with the department to answer questions and to assist with the transition.

Conducting compliance inspections requires the management and manipulation of large amounts of data. Effectively scheduling and conducting the inspections is dependent on the availability of certain data as well as the ability to easily record and manage the data. A priority for the commission is to transition all functions of its current legacy database to an up-to-date web-based application that will enhance the compliance team’s effectiveness. The transition is being realized incrementally as resources allow, with the compliance database module slated for overhaul in the near future.

In addition to conducting inspections, the commission’s six regional officers assist with administering commission certification examinations. A large number of training facilities are located in the Northeast Texas region, so the activity level of that region is extremely high. As the agency transitions to a web-based testing process some of this activity cost will likely be reduced, allowing regional personnel to focus more time and effort on the inspection and support processes.

The commission makes a concerted effort to interact and partner with the state’s various fire service organizations. The agency interacts with groups representing every facet of the fire service throughout the state, attending regional meetings, conferences, and other activities. Generally the commission has found this type of effort to have a positive impact on its relations with the fire service community as a whole. The more the community is able to directly interact with agency personnel, the more the community understands, accepts, and even appreciates the role of the agency, and the agency is better able to understand the particular needs and challenges facing the state’s diverse fire service.

FISCAL ASPECTS AND COMMISSION BUDGET

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection continually reviews and monitors its budget, accounting, and purchasing practices throughout the year. The agency fully adheres to the statewide mission calling for efficiency and complete accountability. The commission takes seriously the fact that it is a steward of both the public trust and public funds, and is committed to meeting its priorities in a fiscally responsible manner.

The commission has been classified as a semi-independent self-funded agency. Funds are appropriated by the legislature to the agency for its operations, but the agency is expected to generate revenue in an amount equal to or greater than the appropriated amount.

The commission was appropriated \$1.94 million for each of the fiscal years 2014 and 2015. The agency spends approximately \$1.6 million a year in salaries for 31 FTEs. Total appropriations, minus salaries, leaves the agency approximately \$340,000 a year for travel, library maintenance and development, training, computer/technology purchases and maintenance, phone systems, postage, office supplies, and other operating expenses.

BUDGET CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A continuing budgetary challenge for the commission rests in a contingency rider attached to the agency's budget, which calls for the agency to generate \$3,000,000 over and above the legislatively appropriated amounts for the biennium. The General Appropriations Act for the 2014-2015 biennium directs that, in the event that actual and/or projected revenue collections are insufficient to offset the cost identified by the rider provision, the Legislative Budget Board may direct the Comptroller of Public Accounts to reduce the agency's appropriation to an amount expected to be available above the \$3,000,000.

In an effort to meet the overall revenue expectations, in 2010 the agency increased its testing, certification and renewal fees from \$35 to \$85. This in turn placed substantial fiscal pressure upon local governments, due to the fact that the commission's statute requires regulated fire protection entities to pay the annual renewal fee for each certified employee.

As local fire departments are forced to absorb these costs, they may opt to postpone or forego additional training and professional development certification programs for their personnel. These non-mandatory "professional development" certifications represent approximately 60 percent of the certificates issued by the agency. Loss of this revenue would have a negative impact on the commission's budget. At present, the Texas fire service as a whole continues to show interest in the professional development certifications offered by the agency, as well as in the development of new ones. Three new certifications were introduced in 2012, three more in 2013, and discussions are ongoing for others in the near future.

In what the agency also hopes will have a positive impact on its revenue stream, the commission recently adopted rules allowing for a second accredited testing process to be allowed toward state certification in several disciplines. It is expected that this will substantially broaden the opportunities for individuals to complete training programs and obtain state certifications. It is, however, still too early to know how the agency's own testing program and associated revenue will be affected as this other testing process is utilized by the fire service community.

AGENCY USE OF HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUB)

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection's purchaser pays particular attention to opportunities for utilizing designated HUB vendors in agency purchases and contracts. The purchaser has been directed by management to use historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) whenever possible. All potential purchases or contracts are reviewed early in the process by the purchaser, giving the agency the ability to opt for a HUB vendor any time the opportunity arises.

TCFP HUB SPENDING, FY 2011-2014

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Commodities	11.35%	31.81%	17.15%	40.93%
Professional services	100%	100%	100%	100%
Other services	56.38%	4.54%	2.97%	
Percentage of total spending	32.81%	25.71%	18.50%	34.70%

OPERATING BUDGET BY STRATEGY, FY14-15

G.A.A. Strategies	2014	2015
A.1.1. Fire Safety Information and Education Programs	\$108,561	\$108,561
B.1.1. Certify and Regulate Fire Service	\$1,132,767	\$1,132,767
C.1.1. Indirect Administration	\$704,731	\$704,731
TOTAL	\$1,946,059	\$1,946,059

IMPACT OF FEDERAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS

FEDERAL AVIATION REGULATIONS, AIRPORT FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Part 139 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, Certification and Operations: Land Airports Serving Certain Air Carriers, effective June 9, 2004, prescribes rules governing the certification and operation of airports used by air carriers with scheduled passenger-carrying flights.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) work together to address issues concerning airport safety and training, as well as the investigation and review of incidents that occur involving aircraft on or around airport property. Over the recent past, the federal government has placed an increasing emphasis on airport and aircraft safety issues, which may result in more controls, inspections and legal action where necessary to affect change in the industry. This translates into the need for associated state-level programs to be constantly reviewed and updated so as to keep up with changes.

The commission enforces regulations concerning the protective clothing, self-contained breathing apparatus, and training requirements of airport fire fighters as referenced in NFPA 1003. The agency updated its rules in 2008 to comply with changes in FAA continuing education requirements. The testing process for Aircraft Rescue Fire Suppression state certification is accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). There are 24 entities in the state approved to provide aircraft rescue/firefighting training, and 44 entities that provide aircraft rescue fire suppression services. This area of enforcement has placed increasing demands on the agency, and in the future could require more frequent inspections and more frequent updates in the state's aircraft rescue fire fighting curriculum and continuing education programs.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS: 29 CFR 1910 (OSHA); 40 CFR 311 (EPA); NFPA 472

These standards specify minimum competencies required of individuals who respond to and operate at hazardous materials incidents. The standards cover the competencies for first responders at the awareness and operational levels, hazardous materials technician, incident commander and other areas of specialization. The commission provides curricula, testing, and credentialing for Hazardous Materials Awareness, Operations, Technician, and Incident Commander. The commission's fire fighter certification requires the completion of training and testing for Awareness and Operations levels. These two levels are prerequisites for many advanced hazardous materials credentials. The commission's hazardous materials testing processes are accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). The agency anticipates increasing responsibilities for state government in this area as responses to hazardous materials play an increasing role in communities' emergency management activities.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM: 29 CFR 1910.134 (OSHA)

In 1998 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued regulations dealing with fire fighter respiratory protection, which impacted the fire service more than previous regulations dealing with fire brigades (29 CFR 1910.154) and the federal hazardous materials rules (CFR

1910.120). The respiratory protection standard affected the procedures and practices of every fire suppression organization having personnel who wear respiratory protection. The OSHA standard contains information consistent with previously developed NFPA fire fighter safety standards. NFPA breathing air standards were adopted by the commission requiring compressed air utilized in self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) to meet national standards for quality and purity. The adoption of this standard helps ensure that fire fighters are protected from breathing contaminated air.

The standard mandates that, once an interior structure fire progresses past the incipient stage and fire fighters begin the attack on the fire, the atmosphere is assumed to be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH). Fire fighters engaged in this interior structural fire fight must wear SCBA that is NIOSH certified, NFPA compliant, have positive pressure, and have a minimum duration of 30 minutes.

The respiratory protection standard also covers an important safety issue commonly known as “two-in/two-out”: Fire fighters must work in teams of two or more, and maintain voice or visual contact with one another and with personnel outside the fire at all times. Before any fire fighters engage in interior structural fire fighting, the standard requires at least one team of two or more properly trained and equipped fire fighters to be present outside the structure. Therefore a minimum of four fire fighters must be on the scene prior to initiating interior fire suppression operations. Of the two fire fighters outside the structure, one must maintain accountability for the inside fire fighters and may not be assigned additional duties. The second outside fire fighter may be involved in a wide variety of duties such as incident commander, safety officer, or operator of a fire apparatus. Both of the outside fire fighters must be able to provide immediate support and assistance to the two interior fire fighters. Any assignment of additional duties for one of the outside fire fighters must be weighed against the potential for interference with this requirement.

Senate Bill 382 77(R), which went into effect September 1, 2001, mandated that fire departments use the “two-in/two-out” concept for interior structural fire fighting based upon OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard 29 CFR 1910.134(g)(4). Commission rules were adopted in March 2002 requiring this type of operation for all regulated fire departments.

ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT (AFG) PROGRAM

The primary goal of the federal Assistance to Fire Fighters Grant (AFG) program is to meet the fire fighting and emergency response needs of fire departments and nonaffiliated emergency medical services organizations. Since 2001, AFG has helped fire departments and other first responder organizations obtain critically needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources needed to protect the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards.

Texas entities have received the following amounts through the federal AFG program:

<u>Grant year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total amount</u>
2003	350	\$29,695,860
2004	348	\$30,159,981
2005	200	\$23,835,582
2006	172	\$18,035,378
2007	178	\$14,353,761
2008	175	\$20,458,290
2009	162	\$14,923,557
2010	97	\$9,945,715
2011	50	\$11,031,412
2012	67	\$7,886,771

STAFFING FOR ADEQUATE FIRE AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE (SAFER)

The federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant was created to provide funding directly to fire departments and volunteer fire fighter interest organizations in order to help them increase the number of trained “front line” fire fighters available in their communities. The goal of SAFER is to enhance the local fire departments’ abilities to comply with staffing, response and operational standards established by NFPA and OSHA (NFPA 1710 and or NFPA 1720, and OSHA 1910.134).

Texas fire service entities have received the following amounts through the federal SAFER program:

<u>Grant year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total amount</u>
2005	6	\$2,151,714
2006	21	\$10,960,990
2007	19	\$8,778,785
2008	31	\$19,060,907
2009	3	\$2,877,777
2010	17	\$9,945,715
2011	50	\$12,650,453
2012	5	\$5,225,565
2013	6	\$5,401,499

FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANTS (FP&S)

The Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) grants are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) program under the purview of the Grant Programs Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FP&S grants support projects that enhance the safety of the public and fire fighters from fire and related hazards. The primary goal is to target high-risk populations and reduce injury and prevent death. In 2005, Congress reauthorized funding for the Fire Prevention and Safety grants and expanded the eligible uses of funds to include Firefighter Safety Research and Development.

Texas fire service entities have received the following amounts through the federal FP&S program:

<u>Grant year</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Total amount</u>
2004	27	\$870,614
2005	13	\$338,554
2006	5	\$222,434
2007	6	\$1,295,561
2008	8	\$758,674
2009	4	\$567,973
2010	7	\$2,564,778
2011	5	\$210,171
2012	5	\$971,675

IMPACT OF OTHER STATE PROGRAMS

RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

This program was created by HB 2604, 77(R). The Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program provides approximately \$12.8 million per year in grants for equipment and training. The program is a cost-share program funded by the Legislature. It provides funding to rural volunteer fire departments for the acquisition of firefighting vehicles, fire and rescue equipment, protective clothing, dry-hydrants, computer systems and fire fighter training. Any chartered non-profit volunteer fire department operated by its members is eligible. Any part-paid/part-volunteer fire department that has 20 or fewer paid members is also eligible to apply for funding from the program. An applicant receiving grant assistance for the acquisition of a firefighting vehicle or truck chassis under this program is not eligible for additional grant assistance on another vehicle for a period to be determined by the Texas A&M Forest Service. It is the intent of the program to approve a vehicle grant for every applicant before providing a second vehicle grant to a previous grant recipient.

RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

This program was created by HB 3667, 77(R). The program is funded by a two percent sales tax on the sale of fireworks. The program provides reimbursement grants for Texas fire fighters to obtain workers compensation, death and disability insurance from private insurance companies. Each year more than 400 fire departments and 11,000 fire fighters take advantage of the grant offering. The program is available to any chartered, non-profit volunteer or part-paid/volunteer fire department, provided the number of paid members is 20 or less. All qualified departments must participate in a fire fighter certification program administered by the commission under Texas Government Code §419.071, the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas (SFFMA), or by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG). Any combination of compensation insurance for fire fighters (Workers' Compensation, Death, and/or Disability Insurance) is eligible. The insurance coverage must include a workers' compensation or similar benefit and a death benefit. Departments may enter into agreements with cities or counties in order to qualify for coverage and/or special premiums. The program reimburses 100 percent of the actual cost of eligible insurance coverage, up to a maximum of \$105 per fire department member covered in the calendar year.

HELPING HANDS PROGRAM

This program was created by HB 680, 75(R). The program allows the donation of used equipment while providing liability relief to the donor. Since 1997, the program has received more than \$18.5 million in donated equipment, including 265 vehicles and 5,184 breathing apparatus, as well as numerous items of PPE and equipment. The program routinely receives donations in the way of structural gear, fire hose, nozzles, rescue tools, ladders, ventilation fans and other items that are essential to the operation of a fire department. Availability determines the equipment award rate; consequently, making a donation is vital to meet the needs of volunteer fire departments who service communities across the state.

The legislation required all SCBA to be recertified to the manufacturer's specifications by a manufacturer-authorized technician before being made available for placement. There is a certification fee that is required from each recipient. The amount of the fee may fluctuate due to increases in certification fees. Each department may be issued up to four SCBAs at a time.

FIRESAFE PROGRAM

This program has processed more than \$1.05 million in protective clothing and gear. The merchandise is purchased in volume in order to pass along bulk-purchase savings to rural and small community fire departments. The eligible fire departments get quality wildland and structural protective clothing at a savings of 30 to 40 percent. Any chartered, non-profit volunteer or part-paid volunteer fire department is eligible, provided the number of paid members is 20 or less.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM

This is a project launched by Texas A&M Forest Service for certain Texas fire departments which will allow qualified Texas fire departments to purchase fire equipment directly from the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA). The GSA permits non-federal organizations to purchase wildfire suppression equipment and supplies directly from its Federal Acquisition Service. The purpose of the program is to assist fire departments in acquiring standardized equipment, supplies and vehicles in support of wildland fire suppression efforts. It is a consolidated purchasing program designed to support national efforts to improve fire fighter safety, protect property, and save lives with respect to catastrophic wildland fire and other national and international emergencies.

Any wildland fire equipment and supplies listed in the current GSA Wildland Fire Equipment Catalog is eligible for purchase. Other equipment and supplies may also be eligible with advance approval by GSA.

Any fire department that is not eligible for participation in the Texas Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program is eligible to request GSA enrollment sponsorship. It includes fully paid departments and combination part-paid/part-volunteer fire departments with 21 or more paid members. Participation in the program requires a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the participating fire department and the Texas A&M Forest Service. Upon receipt and approval of a signed MOU, the Texas A&M Forest Service will request a federal Activity Address Code (AAC) for the fire department through the USDA Forest Service. Once the AAC is activated, the fire department will then work directly with GSA for all purchases. The Texas Forest Service only provides enrollment sponsorship. All business transactions and communications going forward are solely between the fire department and GSA.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT MOTOR VEHICLE SELF INSURANCE PROGRAM

This program was created by the 74th Texas Legislature in 1995. Since its inception, the program has saved fire departments an estimated \$3 million in premiums. Through the program, Texas A&M Forest Service provides low-cost vehicle liability insurance. The vehicle insurance coverage offered to qualified volunteer fire departments is at coverage levels of \$100,000 per person for bodily

injury with a maximum of \$300,000 per occurrence, and \$100,000 for property damage with a maximum of \$100,000 per occurrence.

Any non-profit volunteer fire department operated by its members is eligible, and all motor vehicles in the fire department's fleet are eligible, except ambulances. Vehicles must have a current Texas registration, license plate, and vehicle inspection sticker. Authorized drivers must be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid driver's license.

The insured volunteer fire department must agree to implement and comply with a risk management and loss prevention program, which includes vehicle maintenance records and driver's records. The Texas A&M Forest Service will inspect the volunteer fire department vehicles and records and reserves the right to refuse coverage for drivers with poor safety records.

TIFMAS GRANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS) program was created by SB 1011, 81(R). The program provides reimbursement grants to career fire departments and combination fire departments that are not eligible for grant assistance under the rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program (HB 2604). The program provides \$1.0 million in grant assistance annually, with \$800,000 dedicated to TIFMAS vehicles, and \$200,000 dedicated to all other grant categories. The three categories are:

- Category 1: TIFMAS Apparatus, which will award a 100 percent grant for a standardized NWCG Type I (Tactical Tender), Type III (Wildland Engine) or Type VI (Wildland Engine). The objective of the TIFMAS apparatus grant is to strategically place standardized fire fighting assets within each of eight Texas A&M Forest Service administrative units, currently designated as a branch, staffed and managed by local fire departments; and which can be mobilized at any time by the state for regional and statewide emergencies.
- Category 2: Training Tuition Grants, which will reimburse 100 percent of the cost of tuition for eligible courses, not to exceed \$87 per day per trainee, not to exceed \$610 per trainee, and not to exceed \$6,100 per school. The annual maximum cap per fire department is \$12,000.
- Category 3: Emergency grants to replace personal protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBAs) destroyed in a catastrophic event. The grants will reimburse 90 percent of the actual cost, not to exceed \$8,400 for personal PPE; and reimbursement of 75 percent of the actual cost, not to exceed \$13,200 for SCBAs.

Grants under the TIFMAS program are available only to career fire departments that have no volunteer members and are staffed with paid employees only, or chartered part-paid/part-volunteer fire departments operated on a not-for-profit basis having more than 20 paid members. Fire departments that are eligible for grants under the HB 2604 program are not eligible for grants under the TIFMAS Grant Assistance Program.

FEDERAL EXCESS PERSONAL PROPERTY (FEPP) PROGRAM

Through the Federal Excess Personal Property (FEPP) program, the Texas A&M Forest Service is authorized to acquire excess federal equipment. The property is considered “on loan” to the Texas A&M Forest Service from the federal government. The property is then in turn loaned to fire departments and other emergency response units. The departments are responsible for the maintenance of the property as long as they have it in their possession. When the department no longer has need of the property, it will return the equipment to Texas A&M Forest Service. Upon return to Texas A&M Forest Service the property will be re-issued or disposed of. Texas A&M Forest Service provides various items on loan. Some of these items are portable pumps, tanks, generators and trailers. The most frequently requested and provided items are a variety of trucks. These vehicles range from 3/4-ton 4x4 trucks to 5-ton 6x6 military trucks.

NOTE: The Texas A&M Forest Service is currently shifting its focus from this program to the Department of Defense-Firefighter Property Program (DoD-FFP) in order to structure the program so the property acquired is owned by the applicant, having the title/ownership passed to the fire department or emergency response cooperators.

SELF-EVALUATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Agency Plans

The State Office of Risk Management (SORM) conducted a Risk Management Program Review of the agency in July 2013. The review was conducted under the authority of Texas Labor Code, Title V, Subtitle A, Chapter 412. The objectives were to review the agency's risk management program to verify the extent of loss prevention actions by the agency. SORM also conducted a walk-through to determine compliance with *Risk Management for Texas State Agencies (RMTSA)* guidelines and other nationally recognized standards.

The agency also completed and submitted the update of its Homeland Security Strategic Plan in November 2013.

Lastly, the agency conducted its annual Internal Risk Assessment in March 2014. The results were submitted to the State Auditor's Office and Governor's Office. The agency will use this assessment as an additional tool in its ongoing review of its business processes.

Business Processes

The agency continues to review its business processes to gain efficiencies and provide a roadmap for future success. The agency is currently utilizing portions of DIR's Project Delivery Framework to develop new database applications in order to align the agency with DIR's strategic goal of developing business and technology architectures that drive improved planning and coordination as well as improving both the agency's workflow and information technology service delivery.

In an effort to address efficiency in a proactive manner, the commission is currently working with its stakeholders on a study regarding the feasibility of administratively attaching the agency to another state agency. . The scope of the study involves a review of the agency's support functions, including financial services (budget, finance and purchasing), human resources, and information technology, to determine whether certain predefined goals can be met through the attachment of these functional areas to another agency. The commission expects to have the study completed, and recommendations developed by the fall of 2014.

The commission continues with its major information technology projects of transitioning all of its databases and front-end functions from a legacy system to a new web-based platform. Several of the agency's functional areas have already been transitioned to the new platform, with others under development or in planning. These projects represent a priority for the agency. The completion of the transition will make the commission more efficient and will enhance delivery of services and information. (Please see the Technology Initiative Assessment and Alignment section for more information.)

CURRENT STATUS, OPPORTUNITIES, AND OBSTACLES

The agency's "core" functional sections: certification, testing, and compliance, continue to meet statutory requirements for their areas of responsibility, with improvements to various business processes planned or already underway.

Certification issuance is proceeding at anticipated levels, as prescribed by the current performance measures. Six new certifications have been introduced since September 2012, with others under consideration. The annual certification renewal process is now accomplished via the agency's online interface. Fire protection entities and individuals can renew their certifications using this system, making it more efficient and convenient for both the regulated community and the agency. The commission also recently adopted a new audit program for review of required continuing education (CE) of certified personnel. Previously, CE was reviewed at the time of renewal, which created a substantial volume of work during the two-month renewal period each year. The new audit program allows staff to call for CE at regular intervals during the year, creating much better control of the process. The portion of the information technology project still pending for the certification section is the transition to an online system for applications for certification and IFSAC seals.

The commission continues to conduct certification exams at anticipated levels. There appears to be a shift among the agency's customer base in how exams are being requested and scheduled; more training facilities are leaving it to individual students to request and schedule their own state exam, rather than the facility submitting the request on behalf of an entire class. This trend creates additional work for the testing staff, as it requires staff to prepare and "package" exams individually, as opposed to preparing a group of exams for a training class. The agency is pursuing the development of a web-based testing system, which will transition much of the work currently performed by testing staff from one of "preparing" exams to delivery, grading, tracking and reporting of statistical data. This transition is also expected to free staff to concentrate more on test bank management and auditing of training courses in progress. The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) will perform its site visit of the commission's testing program in July 2014, which is expected to result in a continuation of the agency's accreditation for another five years.

The agency's compliance program of inspecting regulated entities is also meeting its statutory requirements. Compliance officers perform a vital function by serving as the "face" of the agency throughout the state. For some fire departments, particularly smaller ones, working with these field officers may represent the only face-to-face contact they have with the agency and its personnel. A continuing challenge for the compliance program is the loss of the position assigned to the Central Texas region. This position was reallocated to another function to address changes in the agency's workload. The commission hopes to gain the position back in the appropriations process, which will be of particular importance as more and more rural areas urbanize and create additional fire protection entities subject to regulation. For historical perspective, the agency conducted 537 inspections in FY 2001. By FY 2009, that number had grown to 721. Current projections are for compliance personnel to conduct over 1,100 inspections or investigations in FY 2014.

WORKING WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ENTITIES FOR SUCCESS

The commission approaches its mission with an understanding that it is a partner with other members of the Texas fire service community, and that these partnerships exist between the agency and both public and private sector organizations at every level. This understanding allows for the free exchange of information and ideas, and ensures that the fire service is receiving both the oversight and support it needs and deserves. Throughout the year the agency works cooperatively with other state agencies such as the Texas A&M Forest Service, the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Texas Engineering Extension Service, and the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The agency also works with counties, cities, and emergency services districts on a daily basis through all of its core functional areas.

A priority for the commission is to go directly to the fire service community whenever possible by way of attendance at conferences and local and regional stakeholder group meetings.. The agency typically attends the annual conferences of the Texas Fire Chief's Association, the Texas State Association of Fire Fighters, the State Association of Fire and Emergency Districts, and the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas. The commission is an active participant in the Texas fire service consortium group, which is made up of many of the state's fire service stakeholder organizations and agencies. The consortium typically meets quarterly to discuss shared issues and establish working priorities.

Recently the commission worked closely with other Texas fire service entities to develop new certifications designed specifically to benefit both the wildland and volunteer fire service communities. It also collaborated with another agency to institute an additional testing process that can be used by individuals to obtain certain fire certifications offered by the commission. The commission has working agreements with local entities throughout the state that serve as regional testing sites for state certification exams. Additionally, fire service personnel from every region participate in the commission's field examiner program, which was established to provide qualified individuals to serve as test proctors for the performance skill portion of state exams.

KEY RESOURCES

The rulemaking responsibility for the agency rests in the commission board, with input from the fire fighter advisory committee. The makeup of both groups is designed to foster a collaborative approach as the agency works to meet its responsibilities and address issues facing the Texas fire service. Members represent labor, management, volunteers, education, engineering, and the public.

The commission would be hard-pressed to fulfill its current responsibilities without the active participation of persons from every segment of the fire service. The curriculum and testing committee is made up of a variety of personnel from every part of the state. Ad hoc committees consisting of fire service professionals with knowledge and subject matter expertise are also formed as needed to review, develop, and/or update specific curricula and test banks.

With the exception of the commission, members of the committees mentioned above are made up of individuals who volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to the process. They are neither

compensated for their efforts nor reimbursed for their expenses. It is also important to note that fire departments and other fire protection entities give their permission for these individuals to participate in the process. This speaks to the importance that the Texas fire service places upon the role of the commission and its mission to preserve and enhance the safety of the state's citizens and fire protection personnel.

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

A tight statewide budget in recent years has forced the agency to fulfill its mission with fewer resources. The most recent reduction saw the agency's legislatively appropriated workforce reduced from 41 to 31 employees. As can be expected with any reduction of this type, employee morale is affected. Staff concerns persist regarding the ability of the agency to continue delivering services and fulfill its regulatory responsibilities to the degree it has in the past. Of particular concern is the fact that the regulated population and customer expectations continue to grow without a corresponding growth in staffing to accommodate it.

Nonetheless, the staff at the Texas Commission on Fire Protection continues to meet the demands of the job to the best of its abilities. Agency management places a high value on a participative organizational culture. Employees are encouraged to provide input regarding improvements to the quality and efficiency of the agency's operations.

AGENCY GOALS

01. EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE

To assist local governments and other entities by providing materials for use in conducting research on fire protection issues and in developing training resources for fire protection personnel [Gov't Code 419.031].

02. FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS

To enforce statutes and rules relating to standards for fire service personnel education, training facilities, and protective equipment in order to protect the public and fire service personnel against loss of life, injury, and property resulting from fire and related hazards [Gov't Code 419.022, 419.028, 419.029, 419.032, 419.040, 419.041, 419.042, 419.044, 419.045, 419.046, and 419.048.]

03. INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION

It is the goal of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection to provide efficient and effective indirect administration, and to do so at the best value to the citizens of this state. Ancillary, supporting administrative and executive services shall be provided in a manner so as to fully support the programs and mission of the agency.

04. HUB PURCHASES

To establish and carry out policies governing purchasing that foster meaningful and substantive inclusion of historically underutilized businesses [Gov't Code 2161.123].

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY MEASURES

GOAL 01: EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE

To assist local governments and other entities by providing materials for use in conducting research on fire protection issues and in developing training resources for fire protection personnel [Gov't Code 419.031].

OBJECTIVE 01-01:

Provide fire protection research and educational materials for training programs to fire departments and other entities through the fire protection information resource center.

STRATEGY 01-01-01:

Acquire, develop, and maintain current and historical information on fire protection and provide training aids and fire protection information to fire departments and other entities.

OUTPUT MEASURES:

01-01-01.01. Number of requests for agency library resources.

01-01-01.02. Number of research requests for agency information resource center.

GOAL 02: FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS

To enforce statutes and rules relating to standards for fire service personnel education, training facilities, and protective equipment in order to protect the public and fire service personnel against loss of life, injury, and property resulting from fire and related hazards. [Gov't Code 419.022, 419.028, 419.029, 419.032, 419.040, 419.041, 419.042, 419.044, 419.045, 419.046, and 419.048.]

OBJECTIVE 02-01:

Promote high training and safety standards for fire service personnel and enforcement of standards for fire protection personnel.

OUTCOME MEASURE:

02-01.01. Number of inspected regulated entities with uncorrected violations.

STRATEGY 02-01-01:

Certify and regulate fire departments and fire service personnel according to standards adopted by the agency and prescribed by statute.

OUTPUT MEASURES:

02-01-01.01. Number of inspections of regulated entities.

02-01-01.02. Number of new certifications issued to individuals.

02-01-01.03. Number of certifications renewed (individuals).

02-01-01.04. Number of examinations administered.

EFFICIENCY MEASURE:

02-01-01.01. Average cost per inspection of regulated facilities.

EXPLANATORY MEASURES:

02-01-01.01. Examination Pass rate.

02-01-01.02. Number of individuals certified.

02-01-01.03. Number of training providers certified.

GOAL 03: INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION

It is the goal of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection to provide efficient and effective indirect administration, and to do so at the best value to the citizens of this state. Ancillary, supporting administrative and executive services shall be provided in a manner so as to fully support the programs and mission of the agency.

GOAL 04: HUB PURCHASES

To establish and carry out policies governing purchasing that foster meaningful and substantive inclusion of historically underutilized businesses [Gov't Code 2161.123].

OBJECTIVE 04-01:

Include HUBs in a significant percent of the total value of items purchased by the agency.

OUTCOME MEASURE:

04-01.01. Percent of total dollar value of purchasing contracts awarded to HUBs.

STRATEGY 04-01-01:

Develop and implement a plan for increasing the use of HUBs through purchasing contracts.

OUTPUT MEASURE:

04-01-01.01. Dollar value of HUB contracts awarded.

TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ALIGNMENT

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection will focus its technology efforts on four major projects during the next biennium:

- Data Management System Rebuild: FARM and FIDO.
- Online payments.
- Training Management System (formerly Online Testing).
- Electronic Documentation Project

The following summaries utilize the Department of Information Resources' (DIR's) technology initiative assessment and alignment templates.

DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REBUILD: FARM AND FIDO

1. INITIATIVE NAME

Data Management System (DMS) rebuild: FARM and FIDO.

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency has been working for some time to migrate its data to a modern, enterprise-level database system utilizing Microsoft SQL Server. The work involves converting the client-server data management tool from Microsoft Access into web applications. The FIDO system (Firefighters: Information and Departments Online) is made up of three applications, iFIDO (individual firefighters), dFIDO (department management) and ePay (departmental electronic payment system). The FARM system (FIDO Administrative Records Management) is for agency staff to work with the data and process work. Phase One, a hybrid system utilizing the existing databases has been completed and the agency is embarking on Phase Two, which is a complete modernization, transformation and normalization of the databases and applications.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Training Management System (formerly Online Testing) – in progress.

Online Payments – in progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The Database Management System rebuild will support the agency's certification, testing, compliance, injury reporting, travel and financial objectives.

5. STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

P1 – Security and Privacy

P3 – Legacy Applications

P4 - Business Continuity

P8 – Data Management

P9 – Mobility

P10 - Network

6. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

The DMS rebuild will greatly increase staff's efficiency. Formerly paper-based processes, such as the process to renew the certifications of fire department employees, have resulted in savings in paper and mailing costs and have freed staff from having to print and mail renewal documents.

Customer satisfaction has increased as more and more of our customers learned they can manage a great deal of their own information. One of the primary complaints from agency customers in the past was the agency's inability to accept online payments. Online payments, via Texas.gov, were introduced for certificate renewals in September 2013. Ultimately all payments will be able to be paid online.

SQL Server is much more secure and robust than Access. The agency has implemented numerous controls for referential integrity, frequent backups, and database security. However, the existing databases contain data and structures that require modernization and normalization. This will be addressed in Phase Two of this project.

The agency's current legacy, proprietary client/server model is uniquely resistant to modifications and changes. The greatest benefit of this project will be its ability to serve as a foundation for future initiatives.

Security is a foundational objective for this project, particularly with the advent of mobile computing and the growth of threat vectors.

7. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

Budget constraints and lack of human resources continue to impede the agency's ability to make progress on the initiative to the degree desired. In August 2009 an evaluation by ObjectWin, an information resources consulting firm, estimated the proposed rebuild would take five FTEs devoted exclusively to the project a little over two years to complete. (The agency does not have five FTEs for a single project — its entire IT staff is four FTEs). The ObjectWin evaluation only addressed the development of what is called FARM; it did not address other related applications (FIDO, TMS, or Online Payments).

Fire departments and individual certificate holders can now process the certification renewals completely online and make electronic payments via Texas.gov. This has reduced time to process a renewal from weeks to minutes. For instance under the prior system, the average time to process a renewal was 14 days. The average time to process a renewal that is paid online is 25 seconds, if payment is made electronically. Fully 90 percent of renewals are now being paid online.

Phase One of this project is complete. This phase created a hybrid system, to allow for quick deployment of the commission-designated critical functions to customer-facing applications, while retaining the older legacy Access system for use by staff. Phase Two of the project is underway. Phase Two encompasses the creation of a new, modern and scalable database system; migration and transformation of legacy data; development of web-based and mobile applications for staff and customers to access and manage data. Phase Two will eliminate the legacy Access application.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

1. INITIATIVE NAME

Online Payments.

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency has initiated a project to receive online payments for fees from its departmental and individual certificate holders. Online payments became available in September 2013 for certification renewal by departments and individuals. Online payments for other activities are scheduled to come into effect as the Data Management System and Training Management System modules are completed.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Data Management System rebuild – in progress.

Training Management System (formerly Online Testing) – in progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The Online Payments initiative supports the agency's testing and certification objective, Objective 02-01, Promote high training and safety standards for fire service personnel and enforcement of standards for fire protection personnel. It will also promote its Indirect Administration Goal 03 by freeing time currently devoted to payment processing.

5. STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

P1 – Security and Privacy

P3 – Legacy Applications

P5 – Enterprise Planning and Collaboration

P8 – Data Management

P9 – Mobility

P10 - Network

6. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

This initiative addresses a primary need of agency customers. The agency anticipates greatly enhanced operational efficiency by not having to open, secure and deposit thousands of checks every year. Additionally, partnering with well-established, mature, standards-compliant entities will greatly enhance the security and integrity of payment receipt. Customers will no longer have to

wait for surface mail to learn whether their payments are received and applied appropriately. All payments will be tied to specific data functions.

7. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

The agency's Database Management System rebuild and Training Management System development are critical to building the capacity for online payments. The agency's business processes related to receiving and depositing payments currently depend on the legacy Access system.

Although the agency's data has been migrated to a SQL Server backend, the records and tables must be normalized and the client/server front-end applications staff uses to interact with the data must be rebuilt as web-based front-end applications.

TRAINING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1. INITIATIVE NAME

Training Management System (formerly Online Testing)

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency began an initiative to transition to online, web-based testing in 2011. This project grew in scope, due to the business analysis demonstrating that online testing was a sub-project of a larger Training Management System. This application will allow training facilities and commission staff to manage training and testing in an integrated suite of applications and to import/export data with the main data management systems (FIDO/FARM).

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Database Management System rebuild - in progress.

Online Payments - in progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The Training Management System initiative supports the agency's testing and certification objective, Objective 02-01, promote high training and safety standards for fire service personnel and enforcement of standards for fire protection personnel.

5. STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

P1 – Security and Privacy

P3 – Legacy Applications

P8 – Data Management

P9 – Mobility

P10 – Network

6. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

The agency has earned accreditation in numerous disciplines from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), which ensures the agency's training and testing processes meets internationally recognized standards.

The management of training functions has been moved to a modern, web-based system, with a customer-facing management tool for training facilities to utilize. This has created efficiencies with the training facilities entering and managing classes online.

However, the current testing processes are heavily resource-dependent. The agency prints all tests and delivers them securely to testing sites (along with Scantron answer sheets, pencils, and all other required materials). The agency relies on having an adequate number of proctors available to ensure that tests are not compromised.

Moving to an online system with adequate controls over the safety, security and integrity of the tests will greatly reduce the agency's dependence on paper-based delivery methods and will provide greater flexibility for training partners and exam candidates in scheduling exams. It should also help expedite the grading and posting of test results.

7. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

The agency's Database Management System rebuild is critical to building the capacity for online testing. The agency's current business processes related to the testing function depend wholly on the legacy Access system. Administration of all certification exams is currently a paper-based process. Additionally, current exam candidates must pay all associated fees with a check or money order. The agency intends to integrate online payments into the process.

The training management component has been completed and is being utilized by the agency and customers. The online testing module was projected to go into full production in February 2014, however, problems arose which prevented completion as initially designed. The commission directed staff in April 2014 to develop its own internal Training Management System module. The work on this module began in May 2014 and is projected to be in production by early 2015.

ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTATION PROJECT

1. INITIATIVE NAME

Electronic Documentation Project

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency has embarked on a plan to move to a paperless office environment.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Database Management System rebuild - in progress.

Training Management System (formerly Online Testing) – in progress.

Online Payments - in progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The agency objectives are reduction of costs, business continuity and records management.

5. STATEWIDE TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

P1 – Security and Privacy

P3 – Legacy Applications

P4 - Business Continuity

P8 – Data Management

P9 – Mobility

6. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

This project will encompass the conversion from paper forms to electronic forms for customers and staff and the digital imaging and storage of paper forms received from customers via mail or fax. A significant reduction in physical storage space for file cabinets will free up space for other uses.

7. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

The agency's Database Management System, Training Management System and Online Payments system development are critical to implementation of electronic documentation. Acquisition of hardware and software to scan, store and manage electronic documents must be integrated with the various business systems and processes.

APPENDICES

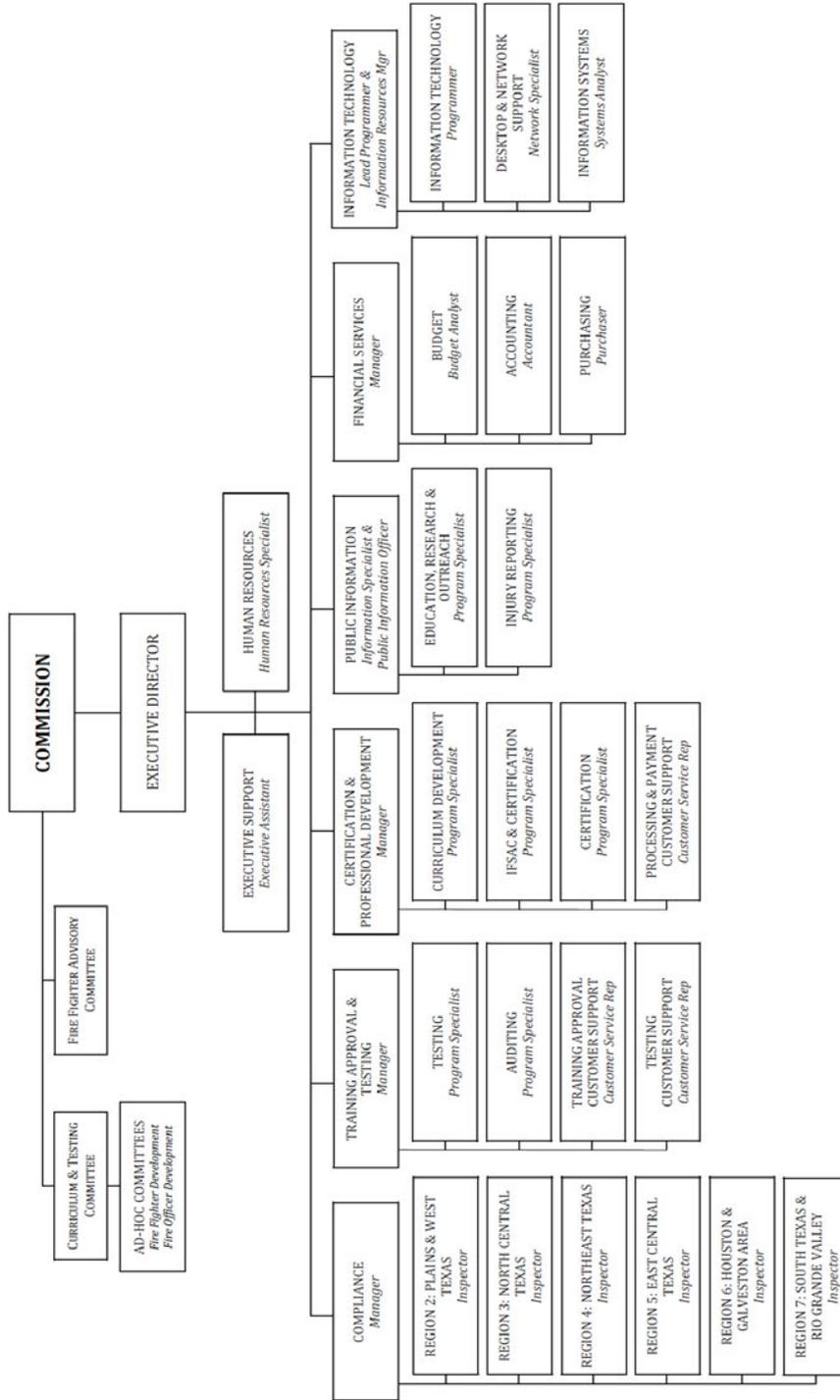
APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF AGENCY'S PLANNING PROCESS

Input on elements of the strategic plan is regularly requested and received from the commission, advisory committee members, agency staff, and the fire service. This input is carefully considered and incorporated into the strategic plan as appropriate.

The strategic plan and budget subcommittees, formed by the commission in July 1995, continue to provide policy guidance and oversight in the development of the agency's strategic plan and budget. The strategic plan subcommittee and the full commission periodically review the strategic plan to ensure that the plan incorporates major policy changes. The commission generally reviews the plan at its January and April quarterly meetings.

APPENDIX B: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Texas Commission on Fire Protection



Capitol Region (Region 1) inspection workload is currently being performed by the other regional officers.

Last updated: 5/2014

APPENDIX C: FIVE-YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR OUTCOMES

Outcomes	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
02-01.01. Number of inspected regulated entities with uncorrected violations.	162	175	175	180	180
04-01.01 Percent of total dollar value of purchasing contracts awarded to HUBs.	10	12	12	12	12

APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS

OUTPUT 01-01-01.01: NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR AGENCY LIBRARY RESOURCES

Short Definition: This measure tracks the number of requests to use library resources from fire departments and other entities within the reporting period of one year.

Purpose/Importance: The number of requests for training aids and other materials from the library indicates the level of demand for these items within the Texas fire service community. This information provides data for the library's long-range planning and purchases.

Source/Collection of Data: Requests for library resources are maintained in the library's electronic circulation database.

Method of Calculation: Total number of requests is obtained from the library's electronic circulation database.

Data Limitations: Since the requests for library resources are entered into the library's electronic circulation database, the accuracy of the count is dependent on data entry.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

OUTPUT 01-01-01.02: NUMBER OF RESEARCH REQUESTS FOR AGENCY INFORMATION
RESOURCE CENTER

Short Definition: This measure tracks the number of research requests during the reporting period by fire departments and other entities from the information resource center.

Purpose/Importance: The number of research requests received for the information resource center indicates the level of demand for research assistance of fire service specific topics. This information provides data for the information resource center's long-range planning and purchases.

Source/Collection of Data: Research requests for information resource center data are entered into, and maintained in, the library's electronic database.

Method of Calculation: Total number of research requests is obtained from the agency library's electronic database.

Data Limitations: Since the research requests are entered into the library's electronic circulation database, the accuracy of the count is dependent on data entry.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

**OUTCOME 02-01.01: NUMBER OF INSPECTED REGULATED ENTITIES WITH
UNCORRECTED VIOLATIONS**

Short Definition: The total number of entities at the end of the reporting period that have incurred any uncorrected violation within the current and/or preceding biennia. Violations are incidents of non-compliance with statutes and rules promulgated by the commission.

Purpose/Importance: Certifying and inspecting entities helps ensure that practitioners meet legal standards for professional education and practice, which is a primary agency goal. This measure is important because it indicates how effective the agency's activities are in deterring violations of professional standards established by statute and rule, as well as the volume of violations the agency handles.

Source/Collection of Data: Collected by staff and input by compliance program personnel. The source of data is the commission's data management system.

Method of Calculation: The measure is a count of the total number of entities that have incurred an uncorrected violation within the current and preceding biennia.

Data Limitations: The number of uncorrected violations found during an inspection of entities is based on the judgment of professional staff. A degree of subjectivity is inherent, but the measure is considered to offer reliable information on the program's results. The accuracy of the count is dependent on data entry by staff into the commission's data management system.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: Yes.

Desired Performance: Lower than Target.

EFFICIENCY 02-01-01.01: AVERAGE COST PER INSPECTION OF REGULATED FACILITIES

Short Definition: The average cost of inspecting regulated entities. Inspection costs vary due to transportation and lodging costs, size of entity being inspected, and number of violations found.

Purpose/Importance: This measure is intended to show how cost-effectively the agency conducts inspections.

Source/Collection of Data: The standards and certification division director obtains from the accounting and budget manager the cost allocations. Allocated costs shall include salaries, supplies, travel and other costs directly related to inspections, including document review, handling and notifications. Indirect costs are excluded from this calculation. The allocated cost becomes the dividend and the divisor is the total number of inspections conducted during the reporting period. Total costs are retrieved from quarterly USAS expenditure reports. A copy of the USAS expenditure report showing all related allocations are maintained for each quarter in the files of the accounting and budget manager.

Method of Calculation: Total expenditures during the reporting period for inspections are divided by the total number of inspections conducted during the reporting period. Costs should include the following categories: salaries, supplies, travel and other costs directly related to inspections, including document review, handling and notifications. Indirect costs are excluded from this calculation.

Data Limitations: Accuracy of average cost per inspection is dependent on correct data entry of inspection related costs.

Calculation Type: Non-Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Lower than Target.

EXPLANATORY 02-01-01.01: EXAMINATION PASS RATE

Short Definition: The percent of individuals to whom an examination was administered during the reporting period who received a passing score.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the rate at which those examined passed. This is an important step in the certification process and a low pass rate may represent unnecessarily restrictive certification requirements, effectiveness of training entities and instructors, or inadequate preparation by testing applicants. The measure also helps validate the reliability and effectiveness of the agency's examinations.

Source/Collection of Data: The source of data is the agency's data management system. The testing program is responsible for inputting examination information into the data management system.

Method of Calculation: The total number of individuals who passed the examination from the agency data management system (numerator) is divided by the total number of individuals examined (denominator) and then multiplied by 100 to achieve a percentage. Persons taking an examination multiple times are counted each time they take the exam.

Data Limitations: Since the data source is the commission's data management system, the accuracy of the count of passing examinations is dependent upon data entry.

Calculation Type: Non-cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

EXPLANATORY 02-01-01.02: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS CERTIFIED

Short Definition: Total number of individuals certified at the end of the reporting period. This measure reflects the number of individuals certified and renewed as fire protection personnel on an annual basis, including paid fire protection personnel, volunteer fire protection personnel, fire protection personnel instructors and individuals certified without regard to their employment status.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the total number of individuals currently certified which indicates the size of one of the agency's primary constituencies. The commission statute requires all paid fire protection personnel in Texas to be certified and allows volunteer fire protection personnel, state/federal personnel and individuals regardless of employment to participate in the state certification program on a voluntary basis.

Source/Collection of Data: The standards division certification staff is responsible for evaluation and data entry of the completed applications. The information services section will query the data management system for the total number of individuals with one or more active certification(s). The information is then given to the standards and certification division director. The standards and certification division director verifies the total. The information is maintained in the office of the standards and certification division director.

Method of Calculation: The total unduplicated number of individuals certified is obtained from the data management system by the agency at the end of the reporting period. An individual who holds more than one certification is counted only once. This measure records the number of fire protection personnel, volunteers, state/federal personnel and individuals certified by the agency.

Data Limitations: The accuracy of the count of individuals certified is dependent upon data entry by standards division certification staff.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

EXPLANATORY 02-01-01.03: NUMBER OF TRAINING PROVIDERS CERTIFIED

Short Definition: The number of training providers certified by the agency at the end of the reporting period. This measure reflects the growth or decline in the number of training providers certified to meet the state's minimum standards for training fire service and other emergency personnel.

Purpose/Importance: The measure shows the number of certified training providers which directly relates to the number of inspectors and the amount of travel required by the agency to properly regulated the profession. This measure does not reflect the total number of training certifications issued by the agency, but it represents the number of providers that the agency is responsible for regulating. The commission statute requires all paid fire protection personnel in Texas to complete training (or the equivalent) by a commission-certified training provider.

Source/Collection of Data: The standards division certification staff is responsible for evaluation and data entry of the completed applications. The information services section will query the data management system for the total number of facilities with one or more active certification(s). The information is then given to the standards and certification division director. The standards and certification division director verifies the total. The information is maintained in the office of the standards and certification division director.

Method of Calculation: The unduplicated list of training providers with one or more active certifications is counted. A training provider that holds more than one certification is counted only once. This measure records the number of training providers certified and renewed by this agency.

Data Limitations: The accuracy of the count of training facilities certified is dependent upon data entry by standards division certification staff.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

OUTPUT 02-01-01.01: NUMBER OF INSPECTIONS OF REGULATED ENTITIES

Short Definition: The total number of regulated entities inspected during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects the quantity of work performed by the commission's compliance section. The commission is required by statute to conduct biennial inspections of regulated entities.

Source/Collection of Data: Collected by inspectors in the field and input by compliance program personnel. The source of data is the commission's data management system.

Method of Calculation: Total number of inspections of regulated entities conducted within the yearly reporting period is obtained from the commission's data management system.

Data Limitations: Since the data source is the commission's data management system, the accuracy of the count of inspections is dependent upon data entry. Inspections that are conducted during an inspection trip that is in progress when a reporting period ends may not be counted.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

OUTPUT 02-01-01.02: NUMBER OF NEW CERTIFICATIONS ISSUED TO INDIVIDUALS

Short Definition: The number of new certificates issued to previously uncertified individuals and individuals certified in a different discipline or level during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: A successful certification structure must ensure that legal standards for professional education and practice are met prior to certification. This measure is a primary workload indicator which is intended to show the number of uncertified persons, or persons certified in a different discipline or level, who were documented to have successfully met all certification criteria established by statute and rule as verified by the agency during the reporting period.

Source/Collection of Data: The standards division certification staff is responsible for evaluation and data entry of the completed applications. The information services division will query the data management system database on the first day of the next reporting period for the total number of active certifications with a print date in the reporting period. The information is then given to the standards and certification division director. The standards and certification division director verifies the total each quarter and the information is maintained in the office of the standards and certification division director.

Method of Calculation: This measure counts the total number of certifications issued to previously uncertified and certified individuals during the reporting period, regardless of when the application was originally received. Those individuals who had a certificate at the same level in the same discipline in the previous reporting period are not counted. Only new certificates are counted. Certificates are counted as new for persons who were previously certified, but whose certificate expired so that they were required to meet all criteria of a new applicant.

Data Limitations: The accuracy of the count of new certifications is dependent upon data entry by standards division certification staff.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

OUTPUT 02-01-01.03: NUMBER OF CERTIFICATIONS RENEWED (INDIVIDUALS)

Short Definition: The number of certified individuals who held certificates previously and renewed their certificates during the current reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: Certification renewal is intended to ensure that persons who want to continue to practice in their respective professions satisfy current legal standards established by statute and rule for professional education and practice. This measure is intended to show the number of individuals who were renewed during the reporting.

Source/Collection of Data: The standards division certification staff is responsible for evaluation and data entry of the completed applications. The information services division will query the data management system database on the first day of the next reporting period for the total number of individuals with active certifications with a renewal date in the reporting period. The information is then given to the standards and certification division director. The standards and certification division director verifies the total each quarter and the information is maintained in the office of the standards and certification division director.

Method of Calculation: This measure counts the total number of individuals whose certification has been renewed. The measure is calculated by querying the agency certification database to produce the total number of individuals whose certifications are renewed during the reporting period.

Data Limitations: The accuracy of the count of individuals whose certifications are renewed is dependent upon data entry by standards division certification staff.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

OUTPUT 02-01-01.04: NUMBER OF EXAMINATIONS ADMINISTERED

Short Definition: The number of examinations administered during the reporting period.

Purpose/Importance: This measure shows the number of examinations administered for both mandatory state certifications and voluntary certifications. Curriculum and test development and maintenance, examination purchase, test administration, grading, and notification costs are directly related to this measure and represent a major cost element for the agency. The testing process determines the knowledge and skills of fire protection personnel to ensure they can effectively do their jobs.

Source/Collection of Data: The source of data is the agency's data management system that tracks each examination taken by an individual. The testing program is responsible for inputting test information into the data management system.

Method of Calculation: Each examination that an individual takes is counted. The measure records the total number of examinations administered for fire service certification purposes, including performance and written tests.

Data Limitations: Since the data source is the commission's data management system, the accuracy of the count of examinations administered is dependent upon data entry.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No.

Desired Performance: Higher than Target.

OUTCOME 04-01.01: PERCENT OF TOTAL DOLLAR VALUE OF PURCHASING CONTRACTS AWARDED TO HUBS

Short Definition: The percent of the total amount of purchasing contracts awarded by the agency to historically underutilized businesses (HUBs).

Purpose/Importance: This measure reflects the commission's commitment to the statewide goal of increasing the use of historically underutilized businesses. It complies with the General Appropriations Act, Article IX, Section 124 and the Texas Government Code, Title 10, Subtitle D, Section 2161.122. These referenced sections specify the HUB information that is required to be reported to the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) by each state agency.

Source/Collection of Data: The source of data is a spreadsheet on the agency's computer network. The data is collected when the purchases are bid and awarded. The data is referenced against the reports the agency receives from the TFC. The person responsible for this information is the agency HUB Coordinator.

Method of Calculation: The percentage is calculated by dividing the dollar amount of purchasing contracts awarded to historically underutilized businesses (HUBs) by the total amount of purchasing contracts awarded by the agency in a given year, times 100.

Data Limitations: Limiting factors can include the limited discretionary funds available for purchasing contracts and the limited number of qualified HUB vendors. Roughly one-third of the agency's commodity purchases are made for the commission library; there are no HUB vendors in this market. Also, the agency is limited to TFC contracts on other purchases. The agency's purchasing section routinely checks the TFC HUB listings.

Calculation Type: Non-Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

OUTPUT 04-01-01.01: DOLLAR VALUE OF HUB CONTRACTS AWARDED.

Short Definition: The dollar value of purchasing contracts awarded to historically underutilized businesses.

Purpose/Importance: The purpose and importance of this measure is to comply with the Texas Government Code, Title 10. Subtitle D, Section 2161.121.

Source/Collection of Data: The data is in an Excel program on the agency's computer network. Reports are also compared to data generated by the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC). The HUB coordinator is responsible for this information.

Method of Calculation: The information is calculated by adding the dollar value of purchases made with HUB vendors.

Data Limitations: Roughly one-third of the agency's commodity purchases are made for the commission library. There are no HUB vendors in this market. Also, the agency is limited to TFC contracts on other purchases. The agency's purchasing section routinely checks the TFC HUB listings.

Calculation Type: Cumulative.

New Measure: No

Desired Performance: Higher than Target

APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN

AGENCY OVERVIEW

MISSION

The mission of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is to aid in the protection of lives and property of Texas citizens, through the development and enforcement of recognized professional standards for individuals and the fire service.

PHILOSOPHY

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection acts in accordance with the highest standards of ethics, accountability, efficiency, transparency, skill, and integrity. We believe the responsibility for providing protection from fire and other hazards that threaten the public safety is a cooperative effort among this commission, citizens, and all branches of the fire service, local government and other state agencies. The agency administers its statutory responsibilities, professional standards and duties, in a fair, just and responsible manner.

AGENCY STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1	EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE <i>To assist local governments and other entities by providing materials for use in conducting research on fire protection issues and in developing training resources for fire protection personnel [Gov't Code 419.031].</i>
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fire protection research and educational materials for training programs to fire departments and other entities through the fire protection information resource center.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire, develop, and maintain current and historical information on fire protection and provide training aids and fire protection information to fire departments and other entities.
Goal 2	FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS <i>To enforce statutes and rules relating to standards for fire service personnel education, training facilities, and protective equipment in order to protect the public and fire service personnel against loss of life, injury, and property resulting from fire and related hazards. [Gov't Code 419.022, 419.028, 419.029, 419.032, 419.040, 419.041, 419.042, 419.044, 419.045, 419.046, and 419.048.]</i>
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote high training and safety standards for fire service personnel and enforcement of standards for fire protection personnel.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certify and regulate fire departments and fire service personnel according to standards adopted by the agency and prescribed by statute.
Goal 03	INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION <i>It is the goal of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection to provide efficient and effective indirect administration, and to do so at the best value to the citizens of this state. Ancillary, supporting administrative and executive services shall be provided in a manner so as to fully support the programs and mission of the agency.</i>
Goal 04	HUB PURCHASES <i>To establish and carry out policies governing purchasing that foster meaningful and substantive inclusion of historically underutilized businesses [Gov't Code 2161.123].</i>
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include HUBs in a significant percent of the total value of items purchased by the agency.
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a plan for increasing the use of HUBs through purchasing contracts.

BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

Under the direction of an executive director appointed by the commission, the staff of the Texas Commission on Fire Protection implements and enforces the commission's adopted rules. The commission is authorized 31 FTE positions and utilizes its personnel in the following functional areas: the executive office, certification/professional development, training approval/testing, compliance, information resources, financial services, and public information/outreach. Supervisors over each of the functional areas report directly to the executive director.

- The **Executive Office** supports the activities of the executive director. The director develops and implements agency policies as required by statute; plans, directs, and coordinates programs and resources of the agency; and develops and executes the agency operating budget and procedures. The human resource functions of the agency also fall under the Executive Office.
- The **Certification and Professional Development Section** manages the issuance of initial and higher level state certifications, administers the annual certification renewal program, performs audits of continuing education, and oversees the activities surrounding development and maintenance of training curricula and test question banks.
- The **Training Approval and Testing Section** oversees approval of certification training courses delivered by nearly 250 approved providers; administers the commission's state certification examination process; and audits training programs in progress.
- The **Compliance Section** performs inspections of the nearly 700 regulated fire protection entities to ensure compliance with established codes and statutes; assists the Testing Section in the administration of state exams; tracks and investigates complaints; and assists the State Fire Marshal's Office with line of duty death investigations.
- The **Information Technology Section** provides information technology and network support to all agency sections and functions; and develops and maintains software programs used by the agency.
- The **Financial Services Section** provides internal support to the agency that includes accounting, budgeting, purchasing and other staff service functions.
- The **Public Information Section** maintains the agency website; provides liaison services to the media and public; administers the agency's injury reporting program; and manages the agency's resource and reference library.

ANTICIPATED CHANGES TO THE MISSION, STRATEGIES AND GOALS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Although some modifications to statutes and codes will likely occur, the commission does not anticipate significant changes to its mission, strategies, and goals over the next five years.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

CUSTOMER DEMANDS

The commission-regulated population, and thus the customer base, continues to steadily increase each year. As of the third quarter of FY2014, the number of regulated individuals stood at over 31,000. As the commission continues to enhance its online interface, and the younger tech-savvy generation makes up an increasing percentage of the population, it is anticipated that more and more of these individuals will choose to interact directly with the agency for their needs rather than defer the interaction to their fire departments. It is important for the commission to work aggressively to complete its web-based system as quickly as possible in order to meet this growing demand.

There is also a continuing increase in the number of fire departments transitioning from volunteer status to “combination” organizations, having both paid and volunteer staff. These departments are hiring personnel to meet the needs resulting from growth and development in their communities, and this transition usually results in the departments coming under some level of commission regulation. This increased demand will place additional burdens upon the compliance staff and its inspection/investigation responsibilities.

The commission continues to develop new certifications in various fire protection disciplines. More often than not, the impetus for development of these certifications is based upon demand from the fire service community. There is a strong and growing consensus in fire departments throughout the state that personnel should possess adequate training and credentialing to do the job. As a result, these departments look to the commission to lead the way in development of the certifications. The agency currently offers 40 certifications or certification “levels” in 13 different disciplines, with discussions underway for others to be added in the near future.

As the number of commission-certified training providers grows, and with it the number of individual training disciplines for which the providers are approved, the demand grows for the course approval staff. The recent launch of the commission’s online training prior approval module has to some degree automated the process, but the course approval process still requires regular oversight by staff.

The volume of test administration and certification issuance remains strong, and is anticipated to continue growing as new certifications are developed by the commission. The agency is working to launch its online certification testing program in the near future.

LONG-RANGE BUSINESS PLANS

The agency plans to address the challenges of increased customer demands and limited human resources by improving efficiencies through ongoing process analysis and increased automation. Employee involvement will be a key aspect of this effort.

CURRENT ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

In 2011, the agency's full-time equivalent (FTE) positions decreased from 40 to 31 as shown in the organizational chart in Appendix B. The current structure is designed to maximize accountability and productivity within the organization, and to address the increased demands placed on the agency's limited human and financial resources, while maintaining existing service levels.

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

SUPPLY ANALYSIS

Workforce Demographics for the agency, as of June 2013, are as follows:

Gender:	Male	62.97%
	Female	37.04%
Age:	60+	18.52%
	50-59	40.74%
	40-49	33.33%
	30-39	0%
	20-29	7.41%
Race:	African-American	14.81%
	Hispanic	11.11%
	White	74.05
	Asian	0.00%

APPROXIMATE AVERAGE STATE EMPLOYMENT TENURE

For FY12, workforce demographics data showed that, on average, agency employees had 7.0 years of state service.

APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES ELIGIBLE TO RETIRE WITHIN FIVE YEARS

An estimated 24.1 percent of agency employees will be eligible to retire between fiscal years 2012 and 2015, according to FY12 data provided by the Employee Retirement System of Texas (ERS).

The following table shows the agency breakdown by percentage of its workforce (as of FY12) as reported by the Civil Rights Division of the Texas Workforce Commission. The commission continues to work toward increasing diversity in the workforce.

Job Categories	State Civilian Workforce			TCFP Workforce		
	African American	Hispanic American	Female	African American	Hispanic American	Female
Officials/Administrators (A)	8.99%	19.51%	39.34%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Professional (P)	11.33%	17.40%	59.14%	3.70%	3.70%	3.70%
Technical (T)	14.16%	21.36%	41.47%	7.41%	0.00%	18.52%
Administrative Support (C)	13.57%	30.53%	65.62%	0.00%	7.41%	7.41%
Skilled Craft (S)	6.35%	47.44%	4.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Para-Professionals (Q) Service and Maintenance (M) Protective Services (R)	14.68%	48.18%	40.79%	3.70%	0.00%	7.41%

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

The agency's turnover rate has historically been lower than the overall state. However, the agency was severely impacted by the loss of nine permanent full-time positions during the 82nd legislative session, resulting in an unusually high turnover rate in the last several years. For FY12 and FY13, the turnover due to retirement was 3.3 percent and 3.5 percent, respectively.

Fiscal Year	State	TCFP
2013	17.6%	20.9%
2012	17.3%	23.1%
2011	16.8%	23.5%
2010	14.6%	10.8%
2009	14.4%	6.5%

CRITICAL WORKFORCE SKILLS

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection values its human capital as its most important asset. Commission employees possess highly desirable skill sets which are critical to accomplishing the mission of the agency. These include: written and oral communication skills; interpersonal skills; expertise related to fire service standards; technical skills related to state systems such as USPS and USAS; and information technology skills.

FUTURE WORKFORCE PROFILE

DEMAND ANALYSIS

EXPECTED WORKFORCE CHANGES

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection will experience many of the workforce changes seen across the country impacted by an aging population. The agency anticipates that these factors may shrink the pool of qualified employees, requiring greater recruiting efforts and more job skills training for new and current employees.

FUTURE WORKFORCE SKILLS NEEDED

To meet increased demands, the agency will use employee teams to boost productivity through streamlined processes and increased use of automation. Communication and interpersonal skills will be critical to the team approach. Technical and critical thinking skills will be necessary for balancing priorities and finding more innovative ways to meet demands. Computer skills will be a vital part of the agency's automation efforts.

Key to maintaining a motivated, vibrant and professional workforce is the development of a comprehensive personnel development plan. This plan will be comprised of:

- A market-based salary review for each position.
- A professional improvement component targeting work skills and work place enhancements.
- Educational and skills training.
- Overall employee improvement.

In the case of employees who must have and maintain certifications issued by the agency in order to perform their assigned duties, continuing education will be included in this plan and will be in compliance with the rules and regulations the agency enforces on its stakeholders. The plan will also address other continuing education requirements of non-certified personnel.

The plan will become a part of the agency's Employee Guide and will be available for each employee's participation. Funding for this plan will be included in the biennial budget process.

ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES NEEDED

The agency anticipates that it will be hard pressed to meet all increases in customer demands over the next five years through productivity and efficiency increases alone. Some augmentation of the workforce, particularly in the area of field operations, is desirable.

In planning for the changes in the workforce, the agency has begun the implementation of an employee succession plan wherein employees learn to perform the duties of their co-workers in the same work group and general classification. The goal of this plan is to provide a smooth transition

and continuation of essential job functions when an employee's service is interrupted, regardless of the reason.

In conjunction with the employee succession plan, the agency is expanding its use of technology to increase efficiency and productivity, and to minimize the need for additional FTEs. Although technology alone cannot address all the challenges facing the workforce, it will serve as an invaluable tool in the agency's overall strategic plan.

Recent legislative changes have also impacted the workload of the agency. To date this workload has been absorbed by existing staff, but the current staffing level should be seen as the minimum required to manage agency functions. Without an augmentation of staff, additional workload may adversely affect service levels.

CRITICAL FUNCTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND GAP ANALYSIS

All current functions of the agency are critical to achievement of the strategic plan. Current employees possess the skills necessary to perform their essential job functions. However as business processes are redesigned and new technology is implemented the agency expects some job functions to change or shift for some positions. This may call for a shift in targeted recruiting and/or skills training. As the agency matures, adapts and grows to meet the demands of its stakeholders, the overall needs of the agency will lead to adjustments in the workforce and functional groups. Through partnerships with other state agencies and stakeholders, the agency will continue to re-align its structure to reflect expanding and expected needs resulting from greater levels of cooperation.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

To meet workforce needs brought about by increased customer demands, business process redesigns, and employee attrition, the agency will:

- Ensure its organizational structure reflects efficient use of its personnel resources.
- Update position descriptions as necessary.
- Provide individualized job skills training that targets essential job functions.
- Provide individualized professional training to meet anticipated skill requirements.
- Utilize a rigorous recruiting and selection process to fill vacant or newly created positions with highly qualified candidates.
- Involve employees in the design and improvement of business processes.
- Increase employee satisfaction and performance through ethical, fair, and performance-oriented employment practices.
- Strategy survey – annual customer satisfaction – increase respondents.

APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection (TCFP) has participated in the Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE) now called the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE) since 1994. The agency uses the survey to analyze its organizational effectiveness, and develop strategies to address identified weaknesses.

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Construct Analysis

Constructs have been color coded to highlight the organization's areas of strength and areas of concern. The 3 highest scoring constructs are blue, the 3 lowest scoring constructs are red, and the remaining 8 constructs are yellow.

Each construct is displayed below with its corresponding score. Highest scoring constructs are areas of strength for this organization while the lowest scoring constructs are areas of concern. Scores above 350 suggest that employees perceive the issue more positively than negatively, and scores of 375 or higher indicate areas of substantial strength. Conversely, scores below 350 are viewed less positively by employees, and scores below 325 should be a significant source of concern for the organization and should receive immediate attention.

