



## **IAFC HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE 2010 – 2013 Strategic Plan**

The strategic plan of the IAFC Human Relations Committee (HRC) is an outline of the committee's goals and activities beginning in August 2010 and extending through 2013. The plan will be reviewed at least once annually in August of each year, revised/updated as needed.

The planning process included the review of the committee's previous plan, the review of the IAFC 2009-2010 strategic plan, the HRC appointment agreement, a survey of current HRC activities and resources, and a SWOT analysis exercise. The majority of the planning phase took place at the HRC committee meeting held in conjunction with Fire-Rescue International 2010 in Chicago, IL. A review of the planning outcomes from that meeting was shared with affinity organizations during the HRC Outreach meeting held in the same timeframe.

### **About the Human Relations Committee**

#### *Mission Statement*

To promote, enhance and improve value-centered human relationships in the IAFC.

#### *Vision Statement*

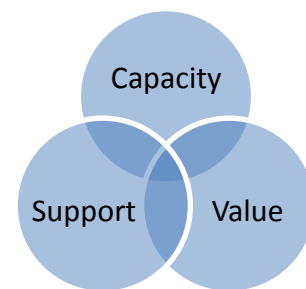
The vision of the Committee is that the fire service will actively embrace an open, respectful, diverse workforce that is responsive to the needs of a changing environment.

#### *Values*

We value a fire service that fosters active inclusiveness, respect, integrity, courage, fairness, empathy, dialogue and honesty.

### **Purpose of the IAFC Human Relations Committee**

The strategic planning process raised a number of continuing questions regarding the multifaceted role of the HRC and its attempts to address the many complex layers of the human relations discussion. However, in understanding that the committee cannot be all things to all people, the committee continues their focus specifically on the IAFC and how best to not only serve its members, but to assist members in serving as a model that can be upheld for fire and EMS leaders everywhere.



As such, the HRC has defined the three following purposes, all of which – though IAFC focused – contribute to a broader cultural shift in the fire service by creating successful organizational and individual leadership models.

1. Support the integration of human-relations values throughout the organization. This will be done through proactively contributing expertise and solutions to the Board,

components, individual members and staff (proactive); also by serving as a touchstone to ensure IAFC actions are aligned with its policy (reactive).

2. Support the board's efforts to create an organizational environment in which all members have the opportunity – and the comfort level – to make a service and leadership contribution to the organization.
3. Provide information, tools, and resources that support member's efforts to strengthen diversity and inclusiveness in their departments.

The committee discussed the need to identify issues of concern, but also to provide recommended solutions to those issues and take action to support implementation of those recommendations. However, the committee also identified challenges in this area that it must work with executive staff or the board of directors to resolve, such as IAFC positions or HRC opinions that may draw legal or political liability. Ongoing and open communications between the committee chair and the CEO/executive director will support this process.

### **Overarching Themes**

Several themes emerged repeatedly during the course of conversations within the committee, within the organization, and with external stakeholders. These are issues that will be applied across the work of the HRC, always operationally and in some cases also programmatically.

#### *Improved communication and collaboration*

Nearly all guidance and discussions contributing to this plan spoke directly of the need to improve communication and collaboration across the organization and with external groups in order for the HRC to achieve its goals. While this will be addressed with any stakeholder group or IAFC component, specific attention will be paid to improved communication with the IAFC Board of Directors, the IAFC CEO/executive director, and affinity groups.

#### *Ethics*

Ethics, when applied as a lens by which to view human relations issues, creates opportunity to broaden both discussion and action. A focus on ethics reflects that human relations issues are about appropriate behavior, professionalism, and fairness...not numbers. A strong focus on ethics:

- 1.) Creates a deeper discussion on the root issues of human relations concepts, and therefore a more solid foundation on which to build improvement.
- 2.) Creates a "comfort zone" on which open and honest conversation can be based; it can help defuse emotionally charged discussion by providing a central and shared perspective.
- 3.) Provides an opportunity to align the work of the HRC with current efforts surrounding both the IAFC and the broader fire service community.

### *“Preaching to the Choir”*

The committee had several discussions regarding the need to address different audiences. While there was some frustration regarding the continued “preaching to the choir”, the committee appreciates that those who are knowledgeable and vested in HR issues are tremendous sources of information and best practices, as well as represent the leading edge of cultural change and must remain informed and engaged. On the other end of the spectrum are those who need remedial education on the issues. The third audience identified is in the middle – those who understand and support human relations issues and ideas, but need tools and resources to support moving from idea to action. The “choir” plays a key role in supporting the middle group’s success as they can identify and work with those of all ranks who are professionally or socially influential and with whom the message resonates, but whose inability or unwillingness to act continues to influence outcomes. The committee is eager to move the discussion from a narrow segment of the fire and emergency service community to the broader population, and will be looking at ways to leverage and move forward each of these audiences.

### *History and Opportunity*

It is clear that the historical actions of the fire service, the IAFC leadership and the HRC continue to have an impact on the ability of the IAFC and the committee to move forward on HR issues effectively. The HRC identified a number of areas of progress and opportunity. The committee discussed the pros and cons of seeking a change to a section, and ultimately determined that the committee structure was the best path, at this time, to staying focused on and achieving the current goals and objectives. As both the IAFC and the HRC continue individual efforts to move the human relations ball forward, the HRC will look to the current environment and proactively act to address the organizations’ needs and opportunities, and seek to collaborate with the board and others.

### **Operations**

The HRC has reviewed current operations and have determined the following is needed to support the goals outlined in the HRC workplan.

- The committee will continue to convene once a month, via conference call, and annually face-to-face at Fire-Rescue International. The committee-approved minutes from each convening will be distributed to the CEO/executive director for review and sharing with the board as deemed appropriate.
- The HRC Chair will remain in contact with the IAFC CEO/executive director on a regular basis.
- The committee will submit at least one formal report to the board annually. The committee will participate in board conference calls as invited.
- Committee members will be assigned to lead specific items from the work plan. The committee will review workloads and any need for additional support of projects, such as the possible development of work groups supported by non-committee members.

- The HRC will take advantage of new technology being provided by the IAFC – such as website enhancements, web conferencing, etc.—in order to fulfill its goals.

### **Work Plan 2010-2013**

The HRC work plan is divided into three sections that reflect immediate action, intermediate objectives, and long-term goals. It is anticipated that progress toward these benchmarks will begin immediately, but they are sorted by the varying lengths to implement and the depths required to consider them fully implemented.

- The immediate action items are anticipated to be implemented within the next six-12 months.
- Intermediate objectives are anticipated to be fully functional within the next 12-18 months.
- Long-term goals demonstrate either ongoing requirements or extended reach throughout or beyond the IAFC membership. It is anticipated that these goals would require at least through 2013 to realize a full sense of achievement.

The work plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with at least one formal review conducted at the committee's annual face-to-face meeting in August of each year.

### **Long-Term Goals**

#### *I. Integration of the IAFC-created Fire Chief Code of Ethics and IAFC Code of Conduct*

The committee aims to see the Fire Chief Code of Ethics widely adopted in departments across the U.S., as well as build awareness of, adherence to, and support of enforcement of the IAFC Code of Conduct. Educational activities will be the central activity, but may also include the gathering of ethics policy data and training models.

#### *II. Proactively communicate and engage with IAFC leadership.*

#### *III. Build relationships and opportunities for collaboration with the IAFF Human Relations Committee.*

Begin and sustain an ongoing dialog with our IAFF counterpart. Identify opportunities to share information and possibly collaborate on programs. A specific near-term example would be a joint meeting to move forward the recommendations of the IAFC/IAFF Joint Promotions Task Force.

### **Intermediate Objectives**

- I. Collaborate with other organizations to support the creation of the Toni Pini Award, sponsored by Fire 20/20. Coordinate discussions between the IAFC leadership and Fire 20/20 to facilitate the presentation of the award to the IAFC Diversity Luncheon at FRI.

- II. Develop human relations-focused educational materials to integrate into IAFC professional development initiatives and training programs. While human relations issues could fit into a number of programs, specific interest is in integrating HR concepts into the Fire Chief Toolbox workshop, company and chief officers programming, and the Labor-Management Initiative.
- III. Improve long-term working relations with affinity groups. Establish liaisons to key organizations to facilitate improved communication and coordination of projects.
- IV. Explore the possibilities of collaborating with the VCOS on an HR-related ribbon report.

#### Immediate Action Steps

- I. Update HR committee web page content. Ensure all content is updated and relevant. Work within the context of the IAFC website redevelopment to enhance the website as an educational tool.
- II. Develop regular HR-related articles for IAFC OnScene. Develop a cadre of experts outside the committee to support content development.
- III. Identify specific issues for FRI 2010 program planning committee. Identify and submit possible presentations to program planning committee. Participate in program planning work group.
- IV. Develop an educational tool to “fast-track” the foundational education process on ethics and professional conduct. The tool would highlight the adoption of such policies and the need to realize their active role and participation in achieving a more inclusive workforce.
- V. Participate in Board teleconferences as invited by the President.
- VI. Improve communication with affinity groups to ensure we are remaining on the leading edge of HR issues and support high-level leadership efforts. Invite key groups to participate in committee conference calls on a quarterly basis to present on current issues and programs, discuss shared concerns or solutions, etc.
- VII. Begin coordination of a meeting with IAFF HR committee to discuss IAFC / IAFF Joint Task Force recommendations.
- VIII. Explore opportunities to participate in the next IAFF Earnest A. “Buddy” Mass Human Relations Conference.

Approved: November 2010