



Center for
Public Safety
Excellence

Strategic Plan

2016-2021



Commission on
Fire Accreditation
International



Commission on
Professional
Credentialing



Technical
Advisor
Program

This page intentionally left blank.

Introduction

During the December 2014 Annual Meeting, the CPSE Board of Directors approved a reinvestment plan for 2015 and, as one of the initiatives, directed the staff to develop a corporate strategic plan. Utilizing the internal skillset of the Technical Advisor Program, the staff set out to engage stakeholders at all levels to develop a plan that would guide the changing organization from 2016 to 2021. The plan presented in these pages was unanimously approved by the CPSE Board of Directors at their December 2015 Annual Meeting.

Through the internal stakeholder work, a new mission was established for the organization: “To lead the fire and emergency service to excellence through the continuous quality improvement process of accreditation, credentialing, and education.” This new mission will galvanize the CPSE staff, board, commissions, and volunteers for the next five years.

The commitment to engaging stakeholders does not end with the development of this plan. We are honored to share our new mission, values, and strategic initiatives with the larger CPSE family and look forward to reporting back on our progress in achieving our goals and objectives as we move the organization forward.

During the development of this plan, a longtime friend and supporter of CPSE, Mike Worthington, passed away. Mike served as Secretary/Treasurer of CPSE from 2003 to 2015. We hope that he would be proud of the work we have done in pursuing our vision for CPSE.

Sincerely,

CPSE Board and Staff



Table of Contents

Organizational History..... 1

Organizational Structure 2

Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning..... 3

Key Stakeholder Feedback..... 5

Internal Stakeholder Group Findings 6

Mission 6

Values 7

Programs and Services 7

S.W.O.T. Analysis 8

Critical Issues and Service Gaps 11

Strategic Initiatives 11

Goals and Objectives 12

Performance Measurement 12

The Success of the Strategic Plan 13

Works Cited 16



Organizational History

In 1986, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) met to develop the concepts and design for continuous improvement of the fire and emergency service. The following year, the IAFC, upon recommendation from its membership, endorsed the development of a voluntary fire and emergency service accreditation program. Then in 1988, IAFC and ICMA signed a memorandum of understanding to begin the development process.

After a decade of hard work and cooperation, in December 1996, IAFC and ICMA executed the Master Trust Agreement, establishing the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) to award accreditation to fire and emergency service agencies and to pursue scientific research and education in the public interest. As the accreditation and research programs grew, the original trust was dissolved and CFAI was incorporated as a nonprofit organization, governed by a board of directors that oversaw two commissions: CFAI and the Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation.

To reflect its larger focus and its importance to all-hazard response, the corporation's name was changed to the Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) in March 2006. CFAI became an entity under CPSE, continuing to assist organizations in making the transition from tactical deployment to strategic response. The name of the Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation changed to the Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC), reflecting the diversity of emergency services.

From its inception, CPSE has brought together diverse (often competing) groups and interests to guide and govern its operations. CPSE has benefited from the support and insight of representatives from IAFC, ICMA, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and the Department of Defense (DOD). These organizations provide their support knowing that governmental fire and emergency services and state and local governments must define how communities should evaluate their risks and allocate their resources based upon the missions and objectives of their emergency service organizations.

Today, CPSE is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation and is a primary resource for the fire and emergency profession to continuously improve services resulting in a higher quality of life for communities. CPSE has successfully helped local public safety agencies around the world streamline and improve the services they provide their communities.





Organizational Structure

The CPSE Board of Directors manages all aspects of the CPSE operations and its two Commissions – the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and the Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC). The 11-member Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) commission is responsible for the decisions regarding agency accreditation, the self-assessment process, and any other CFAI activities. The 11-member CPC is responsible for setting and maintaining the professional designation standards, decisions concerning individual designation, and any other CPC activities.

The CPSE staff, based in Chantilly, VA, includes the Chief Executive Officer, the Deputy Director/CPC Program Director and CPC Program Assistant, the CFAI Program Director and CFAI Program Assistant, the Technical Advisor Program Director, the Business Development Director, and the Financial and IT Systems Administrator.

A group of over 500 committed volunteers and 40 contractors assist tremendously with the work of the CPSE serving as instructors, team leaders, peer assessors, peer reviewers, report reviewers, peer team coordinator, technical advisors, and mentors.

Team CPSE is a dedicated group that continues to change and evolve based on the needs of the organization and the greater fire and emergency service.





Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning

Demands upon nonprofit organizations continue to increase, while available funding and other resources remain limited. This places increased pressure on nonprofit leadership to develop effective and efficient processes for the provision of ever-evolving services. For many successful organizations, the voice of their stakeholders drives their operations and charts the course for their future. To ensure that CPSE's stakeholders remain a focus of the organization's direction, a stakeholder-driven process was used to develop this strategic plan.

A strategic plan is a living management tool that provides short-term direction, builds a shared set of values, sets goals and objectives, and optimizes use of resources. Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer define strategic planning as

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

Effective strategic planning benefits from a consistent and cohesively structured process employed across all levels of the organization. Planning is a continuous process, one with no clear beginning and no clear end. While plans can be developed on a regular basis, the process of planning is more important than the published plan itself. Most importantly, strategic planning can be an opportunity to unify the management, employees, and stakeholders through a common understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work to that common purpose, and how progress and levels will measure success.

“What we have to do today is to be ready for an uncertain tomorrow.”

Peter F. Drucker,
Professor of Social Science
and Management

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





CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

2016-2021 Strategic Plan



The Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning Process Outline

The specific steps of the process are as follows:

1. Define the programs provided.
2. Establish the stakeholders' service program priorities.
3. Establish the stakeholders' expectations of the organization.
4. Identify any concerns the stakeholders may have about the organization.
5. Identify the aspects of the organization that the stakeholders view positively.
6. Revisit the organization's mission, giving careful attention to the core programs and supporting services currently provided, and which logically can be provided in the future.
7. Revisit and update as necessary the values of the organization to ensure that the organization culture is aligned with its customers' expectations.
8. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the organization.
9. Identify areas of opportunity for, and potential threats to, the organization.
10. Identify the organization's critical issues and service gaps.
11. Determine strategic initiatives for organizational improvement.
12. Establish realistic goals and objectives for the initiatives.
13. Identify implementation tasks for the accomplishment of each objective.
14. Determine success factors for the strategic planning period.
15. Develop organizational commitment to accomplishing the plan.

Process and Acknowledgements

The Center for Public Safety Excellence (CPSE) acknowledges and thanks the key and internal stakeholders for their participation and input into the Stakeholder–Driven Strategic Planning Process. Development of the CPSE strategic plan took place in 2015, beginning with gathering structured feedback from key stakeholders that provided guidance toward the formulation of this plan. Key stakeholders included members of the Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC), members of the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI), members of the Board of Directors, Technical Advisors, Workshop Instructors, CFAI Technical Reviewers, Peer Assessor/Team Leaders, Consortium Coordinators, and Strategic Partners. Input received from the feedback opportunities revolved around stakeholder perceptions of CPSE's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; prioritization of the programs and services provided; and stakeholder expectations.

The process of gathering key stakeholder feedback included many opportunities for respondents to participate. While the CPC and CFAI sessions were conducted live, a variety of electronic feedback-gathering instruments were used for the other respondents. As part of these instruments, respondent anonymity was maintained.

A summary of key stakeholder feedback is provided below.





Key Stakeholder Feedback

A key element of the organizational philosophy is having a high level of commitment to stakeholders, as well as recognizing the importance of customer satisfaction. Therefore, CPSE identified its key stakeholders and conducted feedback-gathering initiatives, based on specific themes. Discussion centered on the present programs provided by CPSE, and on priorities for the future. All key stakeholder feedback was presented to the internal stakeholders during their session in October 2015.

Program Prioritization

In order to dedicate efforts and resources to programs most desired by its stakeholders, the CPSE must understand what the Board of Directors considers to be their priorities. With that, the board was asked to prioritize the CPSE’s programs through a process of direct comparison.

Program Priorities of the Center for Public Safety Excellence		
PROGRAMS	RANKING	SCORE
Agency Accreditation	1	45
Professional Credentialing	2	37
Workshops	3	32
Technical Advisor Program	4	28
Excellence Conference	5	26
CFAI Risk	6	16
Merchandise	7	5
Residential Fire Sprinkler Contractor Accreditation Program	8	4

Key Stakeholder Expectations

Understanding what the key stakeholders expect of CPSE is critically important to developing a long-range perspective. With this knowledge, internal emphasis may need to be changed or bolstered to meet and exceed expectations. The top five expectations of the CPSE’s key stakeholders are summarized below.

Key Stakeholder Expectations of the Center for Public Safety Excellence (verbatim, in priority order)

1. Embody uncompromised excellence by maintaining high, but realistic and attainable, expectations/requirements in all programs.
2. Ensure CPSE is not only the example of program expectations and continuous improvement, but lives by the published behaviors.
3. Offer leading edge, program-specific, training and support in varied markets.
4. Provide an atmosphere conducive to fair, open, and transparent communication with all stakeholders.
5. Enhance program delivery and grow participation through the provision of support and guidance to all program participants.





Internal Stakeholder Group Findings

The internal stakeholder work sessions were conducted over the course of three days. These sessions served to discuss the organization’s approach to stakeholder-driven strategic planning, with focus on the CPSE’s mission, values, core programs and support services, as well as the organization’s perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The work sessions involved participation by the following CPSE representatives:

Internal Stakeholder Representatives of Center for Public Safety Excellence			
<i>Preet Bassi</i> Chief Executive Officer	<i>Richard Fagan</i> Technical Advisory Program Director	<i>Katie Jones</i> Finance and IT Systems Administrator	<i>Steve Locke</i> CPC Chair
<i>Tom Mawson</i> Business Development Director	<i>Steve Olson</i> CFAI Vice-Chair	<i>Karl Ristow</i> CFAI Program Director	<i>Cynde Singer</i> CFAI Program Assistant
<i>Debbie Sobotka</i> Deputy Director/CPC Program Director	<i>Steve Westermann</i> CFAI Chair	<i>Chris Welch</i> CPC Program Assistant	

Mission

The purpose of the mission is to answer the questions:

- Who are we?
- Why do we exist?
- What do we do?
- Why do we do it?
- For whom?

The consensus of the CPSE’s internal stakeholders was to suggest the following planning period mission statement:

CPSE Mission

To lead the fire and emergency service to excellence through the continuous quality improvement process of accreditation, credentialing, and education.





Values

Values embraced by all members of an organization are extremely important, as they recognize the features that make up the personality of the organization. CPSE’s internal stakeholders agreed to maintain the following values.

CPSE Values

The Center for Public Safety Excellence pledges our commitment to how we do business. It is a declaration that compels us to listen more, to consider our actions and their impact broadly, and to lead responsibly, transparently, and with integrity.

Progressive Leadership

We will use contemporary, thoughtful, and effective quality products and services that are beneficial to our communities.

Outcomes

We will create mission focused direction, define roles and accountability, and build strong relationships with our customers and partners to positively impact our stakeholders and the communities they serve.

Continuous Improvement

We will continually monitor our operations and industry trends to ensure programs remain contemporary and to identify opportunities for improvement in the customer experience.

Programs and Services

The CPSE internal stakeholders identified the following core organizational programs, as well as the services and functions that enable the organization to deliver those programs:

CPSE Core Programs

- Department Accreditation
- Education (Workshops, Technical Advising, Excellence Conference)
- Professional Credentialing

CPSE Supporting Services/Functions

- CFAI Risk
- Merchandise
- Consortia Outreach
- Publications
- Finance
- Sponsorship Program
- Governance
- Strategic Partner Program
- Human Resources
- Marketing and Communication





- Information Technology

- Mentoring to agencies

S.W.O.T. Analysis

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

Strengths

It is important for any organization to identify its strengths in order to assure that it is capable of providing the services requested and to ensure that strengths are consistent with the issues facing the organization. Often, identification of organizational strengths leads to the channeling of efforts toward primary needs that match those strengths. Programs that do not match organizational strengths, or the primary function of the organization, should be seriously reviewed to evaluate the rate of return on staff time and allocated funds.

Through a consensus process following study of key stakeholder feedback, the internal stakeholders identified the strengths of the CPSE as follows:

Strengths of the Center for Public Safety Excellence	
Commissions	Models and processes
Commitment (customer service and quality)	Professional staff
Contract instructors, technical advisors, and reviewers	Programs
Credibility	Relationships
Educational offerings	Visionary
Exclusivity - only international accreditation model	Volunteers





CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

2016-2021 Strategic Plan



Weaknesses

Performance, or lack thereof, within an organization depends greatly on the identification of weaknesses and how they are confronted. While it is not unusual for these issues to be at the heart of the organization’s overall concerns, it is unusual for organizations to be able to identify and deal with these issues effectively on their own.

For any organization to either begin or to continue to move progressively forward, it must not only be able to identify its strengths, but also those areas where it functions poorly or not at all. These areas of needed enhancements are not the same as threats to be identified later in this document, but rather those day-to-day issues and concerns that may slow or inhibit progress.

Following study of key stakeholder feedback, the following items were identified by the internal stakeholders as weaknesses:

Weaknesses of the Center for Public Safety Excellence	
Concern for profitability / financial stability	Infrastructure
Consistency	Lack of accountability
Currency of materials, models, and processes	Lack of common voice and consistent message
Follow through	
Governance (access to, career path, lines of communication and interaction between board and commissions)	Lack of marketing
	Lack of workforce planning
	Perception of late hits and black holes
Heavy reliance on volunteers	Relationship with ICMA
Inability to rapidly adapt to growth	Technology
Inadequate staff resources to meet growing workload	Value proposition (lack of value identification)
	Website





CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

2016-2021 Strategic Plan



Opportunities

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

Opportunities for the Center for Public Safety Excellence	
Consortium engagement and development	Technology enhancements
Derivative products	To be viewed as a recognized authority
Industrial installation accreditation	Untapped market
International expansion	Untapped volunteers
Program reciprocity (prima facie)	Volunteer department accreditation
Strategic partnerships – support	

Threats

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

Threats to the Center for Public Safety Excellence	
Changing legal and regulatory environment	Liability exposure
Competition	Loss of connectivity with consortiums
Intellectual property infringement	Loss of key support (IAFC, IAFF, ICMA, DoD)
Lack of buy-in	Perception
Lack of currency / relevancy	Unstable economy





Critical Issues and Service Gaps

After reviewing the CPSE’s core programs and support services, and identifying internal strengths and weaknesses along with external opportunities and threats, internal stakeholders identified their primary critical issues and service gaps.

Critical Issues and Service Gap Issues Identified		
- CFAI Model and Process	- Evaluation/Performance	- Political Environment
- Clarity of direction	- Financial stability / profitability	- Protection of intellectual property
- Cohesion		
- Communications	- Follow-through	- Relationships
- Decision Making	- Marketing	- Technology
- Education and Materials	- Messaging	- Workforce Planning / Staffing

Strategic Initiatives

Having reviewed the CPSE’s critical issues and service gaps, strategic initiatives were then identified as the foundation for development of goals and objectives.

Strategic Initiatives of the Center for Public Safety Excellence
<p>A continued primary focus on maintaining and enhancing the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) and Commission on Professional Credentialing (CPC) Models and Processes is required. Noted below are strategic initiatives that will ensure that the CFAI and CPC models and processes remain current and effective.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Education • Financial Stability • Relationships • Technology • Workforce Planning





Goals and Objectives

In order to continuously achieve the mission of the CPSE, realistic goals and objectives with timelines for completion must be established to enhance strengths, address identified weaknesses, provide a clear direction, and address the concerns of the stakeholders. These should become a focus of organization efforts, as they will direct the organization to its desired future while having reduced the obstacles and distractions along the way. Leadership-established work groups should meet and manage progress toward accomplishing these goals and objectives, adjusting timelines as warranted and sharing progress and/or changes.

After considering all information provided by stakeholders, goals and objectives were developed by the internal stakeholder group.

“Goals allow you to control the direction of change in your favor.”

Brian Tracy,
Author

Performance Measurement

As output measurement can be challenging, the organization must focus on the assessment of progress toward achieving improved output. Collins states, “What matters is not finding the perfect indicator, but settling upon a *consistent and intelligent* method of assessing your output results, and then tracking your trajectory with rigor.”² They must further be prepared to revisit and revise their goals, objectives, and performance measures to keep up with accomplishments and environmental changes. It has been stated that:

- **If you don’t measure the results of your plan, you can’t tell success from failure.**
- **If you can’t see success, you can’t reward it.**
- **If you can’t reward success, you’re probably rewarding failure.**
- **If you can’t see success, you can’t learn from it.**
- **If you can’t recognize failure, you can’t correct it.**
- **If you can demonstrate results, you can win public support.**

Reinventing Government
David Osborn and Ted Gaebler

...successful strategic planning requires continuing review of actual accomplishments in comparison with the plan...periodic or continuous environmental scanning to assure that unforeseen developments do not sabotage the adopted plan or that emerging opportunities are not overlooked.³

² Collins Good to Great and the Social Sectors. Boulder, 2009

³ Sorokin, Ferris and Hudak. Strategies for Cities and Counties. Public Technology, 1984.





CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

2016-2021 Strategic Plan



In order to establish that the CPSE's strategic plan is achieving results, performance measurement data will be implemented and integrated as part of the plan. An integrated process, known as "Managing for Results," will be utilized, which is based upon the following:

- The identification of strategic goals and objectives;
- The determination of resources necessary to achieve them;
- The analyzing and evaluation of performance data; and
- The use of that data to drive continuous improvement in the organization.

A "family of measures" typically utilized to indicate and measure performance includes the following:

- **Inputs:** Value of resource used to produce an output.
- **Outputs:** Quantity or number of units produced which are activity-oriented and measurable.
- **Efficiency:** Inputs used per output (or outputs per input).
- **Service Quality:** The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, or how accurately or timely a service is provided.
- **Outcome:** Qualitative consequences associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer. Outcome focuses on the ultimate "why" of providing a service.

The Success of the Strategic Plan

The CPSE has approached its desire to develop and implement a strategic plan by asking for and receiving input from key and internal stakeholders during the development stage of the planning process. The organization utilized professional guidance and the Stakeholder-Driven Strategic Planning Process to compile this document. The success of the CPSE's strategic plan will not only depend upon implementation of the goals and their related objectives, but from support received from the CPSE Board, the internal stakeholders, and the larger CPSE community.

"No matter how much you have achieved, you will always be merely good relative to what you can become. Greatness is an inherently dynamic process, not an end point."

Good to Great and the Social Sectors
Jim Collins

Provided the stakeholder-driven strategic planning process is kept dynamic and supported by effective leadership and active participation, it will be a considerable opportunity to unify key and internal stakeholders through a jointly developed understanding of organizational direction; how all vested parties will work to achieve the mission, values, and goals; and how the organization will measure and be accountable for its progress and successes.⁴

⁴ Matthews (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*





Glossary of Terms, Acronyms, Initialisms

Accreditation	A process by which an association or organization evaluates and recognizes a program of study or an institution as meeting certain predetermined standards or qualifications. It applies only to organizations and their programs of study or their services. Accreditation ensures a basic level of quality in the services received from an organization.
CFAI	Commission on Fire Accreditation International
CPSE	Center for Public Safety Excellence
Customer(s)	The person or group who establishes the requirement of a process and receives or uses the outputs of that process; or the person or entity directly served by the organization.
Efficiency	A performance indication where inputs are measured per unit of output (or vice versa).
Environment	Circumstances and conditions that interact with and affect an organization. These can include economic, political, cultural, and physical conditions inside or outside the boundaries of the organization.
IAFF	International Association of Fire Fighters
ICMA	International City/County Management Association
Input	A performance indication where the value of resources are used to produce an output.
ISO	Insurance Services Office
IT	Information Technology
Mission	An enduring statement of purpose; the organization's reason for existence. Describes what the organization does, for whom it does it, and how it does it.
NFPA	National Fire Protection Association
Outcome	A performance indication where qualitative consequences are associated with a program/service; i.e., the ultimate benefit to the customer.
Output	A performance indication where a quality or number of units produced is identified.
Performance Measure	A specific measurable result for each goal and/or program that indicates achievement.
Stakeholder	Any person, group, or organization that can place a claim on, or influence the organization's resources or outputs, is affected by those outputs, or has an interest in or expectation of the organization.





CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXCELLENCE

2016-2021 Strategic Plan



Strategic Plan

A long-range planning document that defines the mission of the organization and broadly identifies how it will be accomplished, and that provides the framework for more detailed annual and operational plans.

Strategic Planning

The continuous and systematic process whereby guiding members of an organization make decisions about its future, develop the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future, and determine how success is to be measured.

Vision

An idealized view of a desirable and potentially achievable future state - where or what an organization would like to be in the future.





Works Cited

Collins, J. (2009). *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*. Boulder: Jim Collins.

Commission on Fire Accreditation International. (2009). *Fire & Emergency Service Self-Assessment Manual*. (8th Ed.)

Federal Benchmarking Consortium. (1997, February). *Serving the American Public: Best Practices in Customer-Driven Strategic Planning*. Retrieved April 25, 2009, from GovInfo: <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/npr/library/papers/benchmark/customer.html>

Matthews, Joseph (2005). *Strategic Planning and Management for Library Managers*. Libraries Unlimited.

Sorkin, Ferris, & Hudak. (1984). *Strategies for Cities and Counties*. Public Technology.

