




TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION
AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR
FISCAL YEARS 2013-2017

<u>Commission Members</u>	<u>Dates of Term</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Steven C. Tull, Presiding Officer	2009-2015	Valley Mills
Elroy Carson, Asst. Presiding Officer	2011-2017	Ransom Canyon
John K. Gillette III, Secretary	2011-2017	Frisco
Les Bunte	2009-2015	Bryan
Yusuf Elias Farran	2009-2015	El Paso
Carl "Gene" Giles	2009-2015	Carthage
Joseph "Jody" Anthony Gonzalez	2007-2013	Denton
John W. Green	2011-2017	San Leon
John McMakin	2011-2013	LaRue
Leonardo "Lenny" Perez	2010-2013	Brownsville
Arthur Pertile, III	2008-2013	Katy
Tony Cortes	2010-2015	San Antonio

Submitted July 18, 2012

Signed: 
Executive Director


Approved: 
Presiding Officer

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEWIDE VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY	3
VISION	3
MISSION	3
PHILOSOPHY.....	4
RELEVANT STATEWIDE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS	5
EDUCATION—HIGHER EDUCATION.....	5
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	5
PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE	6
NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE.....	7
REGULATORY	7
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	8
AGENCY MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY	11
MISSION	11
PHILOSOPHY.....	11
EXTERNAL/INTERNAL ASSESSMENT	13
AGENCY OVERVIEW	13
ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS.....	17
FISCAL ASPECTS	24
IMPACT OF FEDERAL STATUTES AND REGULATIONS	26
IMPACT OF OTHER STATE PROGRAMS.....	31
SELF-EVALUATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT	34
AGENCY GOALS	38
01. EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE.....	38
02. FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS	38
03. INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION	38
04. HUB PURCHASES	38

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY MEASURES	39
GOAL 01: EDUCATION & ASSISTANCE.....	39
GOAL 02: FIRE DEPARTMENT STANDARDS.....	40
GOAL 03: INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION	41
GOAL 04: HUB PURCHASES.....	42
TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT AND ALIGNMENT	44
DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM REBUILD: FARM AND FIDO	45
ONLINE PAYMENTS.....	48
ONLINE TESTING	50
APPENDICES	52
APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF AGENCY’S PLANNING PROCESS	52
APPENDIX B: CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART	53
APPENDIX C: FIVE-YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR OUTCOMES	54
APPENDIX D: LIST OF MEASURE DEFINITIONS	55
APPENDIX E: WORKFORCE PLAN	69
APPENDIX F: SURVEY OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT.....	79

STATEWIDE VISION, MISSION, AND PHILOSOPHY

From Strengthening Our Prosperity: The Statewide Strategic Planning Elements for Texas State Government, March 2012.

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 2012*.

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.

The commission establishes minimum curriculum requirements and serves as the state's approval authority for all fire safety training programs conducted by or for state or local governments. Through its fire fighter advisory committee and its 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.

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 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.

Fire has an enormous impact on the state's economic well-being. In 2010 (the most current year available), Texas incurred \$510,113,505 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.

House Bill 3866, 81(R), mandated that "only an individual certified by the commission as a fire inspector may conduct a fire safety inspection required by a state or local law, rule, regulation or ordinance." This legislation, and the ensuing training and certification of individuals performing these inspections, should raise the level of protection from the threat of fire and related incidents resulting from non-complaint practices or construction of facilities in the State of Texas. In the long run this should reduce the economic impact that fire and other hazards have on business continuity and losses associated directly and indirectly with doing business in the State.

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.
- Number of federal, state, and local agencies participating in the Texas Department of Public Safety Intelligence (Fusion) Center.

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 and rescue services. These programs are ever expanding to meet the needs associated with protecting Texans from any hazard that may strike the State, natural or man-made. The commission coordinates with other public safety stakeholders in the development of these programs.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND AGRICULTURE

Priority Goal: To conserve and protect our state's natural resources (air, water, land, wildlife and mineral resources) by: providing leadership and policy guidance for state, federal, and local initiatives; maintaining Texas' status as a leader in agriculture; and encouraging responsible, sustainable economic development.

Applicable Benchmarks:

- Percent of nitrogen oxide and criteria pollutants reduced in the air.
- Percent of water conservation through decreased water usage, increased water reuse, and brush control.
- Percent of Texas waters that meet or exceed safe water quality standards.
- Percent of polluted site clean-ups to protect the environment and public health.
- Percent of land that is preserved and accessible through continuation of public and private natural and wildlife areas.
- Average time required in responding to natural disasters such as wildfires and hurricanes.

Prudent and innovative management includes protecting the state's natural resources from destruction by fire. By helping to ensure that the Texas fire service meets nationally recognized standards, the commission has an indirect impact on minimizing fire's impact on the state's natural resources.

Fire fighters are first responders at most hazardous materials incidents. As such, the fire fighter must be prepared to contain and mitigate the results of such incidents. The proper response to any hazardous materials incident affects the quality of air and water in the surrounding area.

Additionally, wildland fires and fires in the growing wildland/urban interface continue to be threats to the natural resources of the state. Suppression techniques are enhanced through the commission's curriculum development and training resources.

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:

- Average annual homeowners and automobile insurance premiums as a percent of the national average.
- 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 via Internet.

The commission pursues the safety and health of fire protection personnel through the development and enforcement of recognized adopted standards.

The commission's fire fighter advisory committee, which is statutorily required to review all rules adopted by the commission, is composed primarily of members of the entities regulated or served by the commission. The commission seeks to ensure that the rules it enacts and the standards it sets meet or exceed nationally recognized guidelines. The commission seeks to provide a high degree of fire safety with minimal market restrictions.

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 to reduce fire protection personnel injuries and develop recommendations for reducing those injuries. These recommendations are then submitted to the State Fire Marshal's Office for inclusion into its annual line of duty death report.

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 taxes per capita.
- Total state spending per capita.
- Percent change in state spending, adjusted for population and inflation.
- State and local taxes 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 always 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 Assessment to implement customer suggestions that will result in more efficient procedures. The Customer Satisfaction Assessment survey distribution is an example of the commission's attempt to respond to required activities in the most economical way possible.

The commission continually researches ways to improve its delivery of information and services through the Internet. The agency has developed and will continue to develop methods for providing and receiving information from the fire service and the public through its website. The commission's outreach programs are designed to inform both the public and stakeholder groups about current trends in fire education, prevention, health and safety, as well as to provide information that will help minimize the effects of hazardous conditions that impact the lives and livelihood of citizens.

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, 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 considerably. 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) significantly 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 (PASS).

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

In 2003, the 78th Legislature reduced the agency's budget approximately \$650,000 per year and reduced the agency's FTE count from 35 to 32.

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 2007, HB 2484 80(R) amended the composition of the Funds Allocation Advisory Committee. The agency was also granted an increase of one additional full-time equivalent (FTE) position.

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.

The 81st Legislature also passed HB 2854, relating to license plates created by the Texas Department of Transportation for professional fire fighters. The agency was nominated to receive the revenues for these license plates, serving as a "pass through" to the Texas Fire Fighter Relief and Scholarship Fund, which provides emergency relief and college scholarship funds to professional fire fighters and their dependents.

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.

AFFECTED POPULATIONS

The commission regulates 667 entities. There are approximately 1,500 volunteer fire departments in Texas. Volunteer fire departments are not regulated by the commission. However, volunteer fire departments are able to utilize commission resources such as the Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library, and may voluntarily comply with the commission's certification program.

The commission estimates that the Texas fire service consists of approximately 78,000 fire fighters, of which 29,815 are subject to commission certification requirements. The commission estimates that there are approximately 30,000 fire fighters associated with the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association (SFFMA), an association consisting mainly of volunteers. These estimates leave approximately 18,185 fire fighters in the state who are neither certified by the commission nor members of the SFFMA.

FIRE IN TEXAS

Information regarding fires in Texas is gathered by Texas Fire Incident Reporting System (TEXFIRS), which is administered by the State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO), a division of the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI). TEXFIRS reports its data to the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS).

Participation by Texas fire departments in TEXFIRS is voluntary. In 2010, 1,034 fire departments reported 1,565,455 fire and non-fire incidents to the system, a nine percent increase in the number of incidents for the year. The information below is derived from TEXFIRS and NFIRS annual reports.

In 2010, there were 1,565,455 fire and non-fire incidents reported to TEXFIRS. These fires resulted in 175 civilian deaths, 791 civilian fire injuries, and \$510,113,505 in property loss, with a fire occurring in Texas every seven minutes. In residential structure fires the kitchen or cooking area was defined as the most frequent area of origin. Residential structure fires were responsible for 65 percent of the reported fire-related civilian deaths, of which 24 percent involved the elderly (age 65 or over). There were 5,592 incendiary or suspicious fires, the most frequently identified known cause in all fatal residential structure fires. Fire cause was not identified in 43 percent of these residential structure fires and in 65 percent of all residential structure or known fires involving civilian deaths.

FIRE FIGHTER INJURIES AND CASUALTIES

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

On September 1, 2001, the 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 (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for 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 fire protection personnel injuries. By September 1 of each year, the commission is required to forward the recommendations to the SFMO for inclusion in its annual report as required by §417.0075 of the Texas Government Code.

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

- The reporting of trends to affected departments encourages local action to minimize unintended or unsafe acts. This reporting process also identifies “near-miss” events. Once these are identified, the commission assigns personnel to assist the department with the analysis of near-miss events. (With the permission of the affected department, the commission shares these near-miss reports with fire service stakeholders, in order to encourage a review of current practices and to apply best 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 Firefighters Foundation’s “Courage to Be Safe – Everyone Goes Home” program. This program identifies steps that fire fighters and fire protection entities can incorporate into everyday activities not only to 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. (This program also requires continuing education. The State of Texas is the first in the nation to adopt this program as a requirement for its certified fire fighters.)

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 controlled by representatives of the entities that the commission regulates. A majority of members of the rulemaking body—the commissioners themselves—are required to be active members of the fire service. They each 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 an additional public member. The addition of these public members completes the representation of all constituents 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. The FFAC plays a unique role in that while the commission is the designated rulemaking authority, it does not usually initiate proposals for rule changes. Except on rare occasions, rule recommendations that come before the commission for approval are drafted by the FFAC. The FFAC (whose members represent the entities regulated by the commission) 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 amendments to language in rule proposals without the FFAC’s review. However, in 2005, Senate Bill 879 79(R) gave

the commission the authority to make non-substantive clerical changes to its proposed rules without review by the advisory committee.

To the rank-and-file fire fighter, and to the general public, the term “fire protection” in the commission’s title often implies a much broader range of services than those that actually fall within the commission’s statutory authority. The commission’s scope is limited to providing research materials and setting minimum training standards to ensure fire fighter health and safety by establishing standards for and inspecting personal protective equipment. Several other critical fire protection activities—including the actual performance of fire suppression duties, developing and distributing fire prevention education materials, and inspecting fire station apparatus and community water supplies—are conducted by other agencies and authorities at both the state and local levels. A recurring misconception about the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is that it regulates the volunteer fire service, which it does not. The commission strives to serve as a resource for Texans by helping to identify the proper agencies to address the public’s fire protection needs.

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 an advisory committee established under Chapter 419 of the Texas Government Code, the fire fighter advisory committee. An additional advisory committee, the curriculum and testing committee, was created by the commission.

The fire fighter advisory committee consists of six members who 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. 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 curriculum and testing and training programs. Members of the curriculum and testing committee are nominated by the fire fighter advisory committee and are appointed by the commission.

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 FTE positions in three divisions: the executive office, financial services, and fire service standards and certification.

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; oversees information resource management; and develops and executes the agency operating budget and procedures. The **Financial Services** team provides internal support to the agency, including accounting, budgeting, purchasing and other staff service functions. The **Fire Service Standards and Certification** division administers the commission's fire service certification, compliance, testing, curriculum development, and fire protection resource library programs. The functions of the division include:

- Regulating paid fire protection personnel, fire departments, and training facilities.
- Performing biennial inspections of fire departments, local government agencies providing fire protection, and institutions or facilities conducting training for fire protection personnel or recruits.
- Establishing minimum curriculum requirements, evaluating courses, and administering examinations for certification as fire protection personnel.
- Establishing minimum requirements and evaluates courses for higher levels of fire protection personnel certification.
- Enforcing standards for protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus.

- Administering a voluntary certification and regulation program for qualified individuals not connected with local governments or volunteer fire departments.
- Administering a voluntary certification and regulation program for volunteer fire protection personnel, fire departments, and training facilities.
- Enforcing continuing education programs for all levels of fire protection personnel.
- Administering the Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library.
- Compiling information and data on fire protection personnel injuries and presenting data to the commission to develop recommendations to reduce personnel injuries.
- Tracking and analyzing complaint and violation data.

In FY11, the Fire Service Standards and Certification Division:

- Renewed 29,815 certified fire protection personnel.
- Inspected or investigated 342 regulated entities.
- Evaluated 1,412 fire service training programs.
- Administered 8,207 certification examinations.
- Conducted 1,964 criminal background checks.
- Issued 9,468 new fire protection personnel certificates.

In Texas, minimum standards for certification as a fire fighter exceed those of many other states. The International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) has accredited several of the commission's testing processes for certification.

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 required for persons employed as a Head of Department and offers additional certifications for Hazardous Materials Technician, Driver/Operator-Pumper, Fire Officer I and II, and four levels of Fire Instructor.

A change brought about by the 1997 Sunset legislation gave individuals not affiliated with fire departments the ability to maintain their commission certifications. Approximately 3,000 individuals per year take advantage of this opportunity.

ERNEST A. EMERSON FIRE PROTECTION RESOURCE LIBRARY

The commission's Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library is critical 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 constituents and the general public. It does this by providing resources for fire protection research and by providing educational materials to fire departments and other entities, individuals, and commission staff and committees.

The Emerson Library provides its patrons with quality training and research materials and services. With an up-to-date collection, in formats required by today's customers, the library will be the first stop for training officers or anyone else needing assistance with finding quality resources. The librarian on staff provides superior research and reference services to anyone with fire- or emergency-related questions or research projects. The librarian coordinates the dissemination of agency and library information with commission staff via the commission outreach team's communications and online initiatives.

The Emerson Library's recent 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 focused on hot topics, direct outreach to constituents, collaborative work with Texas fire service organizations, and social media marketing, have broadened the Emerson Library's reach. A new online library request system is being developed and will soon allow easier access to the library print collection.

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
Phone: (512) 936-3838
Fax: (512) 936-3808

REGIONAL OFFICES AND GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

Allen (co-located with Allen Fire Department) 310 Century Parkway Allen, Texas 75013 (214) 509-4474 (214) 509-4475 (Fax)	Lufkin (co-located with Texas Forest Service) P.O. Box 409 2127 South First Street Lufkin, Texas 75902-0409 (936) 632-8034 (936) 632-8051 (Fax)
Fort Worth Fort Worth State Office Bldg. 1501 Circle Drive Fort Worth, Texas 76119-8727 (817) 321-8634 (817) 321-8675 (Fax)	San Antonio G. J. Sutton Bldg. 321 Center Street, Suite 1083 San Antonio, Texas 78202 (210) 223-5456 (210) 223-5436 (Fax)
Lubbock 22 Briercroft Office Park, Ste. 13 Lubbock, Texas 79412-3010 (806) 744-6037 (806) 744-6397 (Fax)	Houston 5425 Polk Street Houston, Texas 77023-1444 (713) 422-8998 (713) 422-8999(Fax)
Austin 1701 N. Congress Ave., Suite 1-105 Austin, Texas 78701 (512) 936-3838 (512) 936-3808(Fax)	

The commission has seven regional offices throughout Texas. The regional distribution is based on the number of regulated fire departments and other regulated entities (i.e., training facilities, fire marshal offices, etc.) in each region. The commission inspects each department or entity it regulates once every two years. Due to budget cuts over the past several legislative sessions, the Central Texas/Austin regional area inspection workload is currently being performed by the other six regional officers. The Central Texas/Austin regional area FTE position was reassigned to another function in the agency in order to meet new statutorily mandated responsibilities.

Although the number of departments (and hence the number of inspections) 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 is the third-largest fire department in the nation, so it takes much more time and resources to inspect than any other department.

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. The agency is mandated to maintain a complaint tracking system. Any inspection resulting from a complaint could be considered a risk-based inspection. These inspections cannot be planned or strategically scheduled, thus making it difficult to plan the workload associated with these inspections. More analysis or assessment needs to be done to identify risk factors and causes in order to determine an appropriate strategy to mitigate the risk. The agency collects and evaluates information and data received on injuries to fire protection personnel and determines the nature of injuries it will investigate, thus these investigations/inspections are considered risk-based.

The agency also provides outreach and education to both the regulated and non-regulated fire service throughout Texas. This service is provided 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 the agency gains greater knowledge and understanding of the risk factors to fire fighters from its regularly scheduled inspections and risk based inspections, it has an obligation to educate and inform the regulated and non-regulated entities, as well as its stakeholder groups.

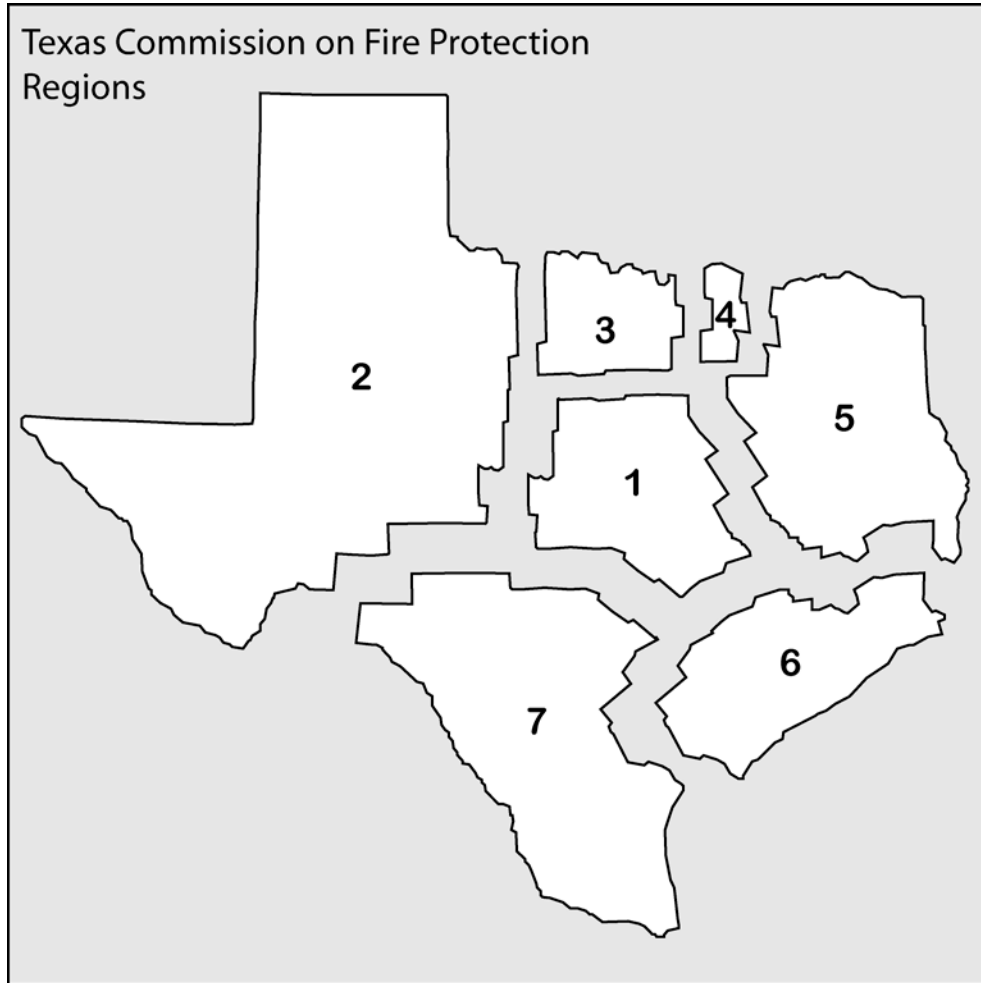
Conducting compliance inspections requires the management and manipulation of large amounts of data. Effectively scheduling and conducting the inspections is dependent on the availability of certain data as well as the ability to easily record and manage the data. The current database is antiquated and is not conducive to effective or efficient entering, storing, accessing or analyzing data. Combining this problem with the inefficient process of hand-recording inspection data at the inspection site, and then manually inputting the inspection data at a later time, is an ineffective and inefficient use of staff time. The use of more modern technologies, such as ruggedized laptops or tablet technology, combined with a more robust database, would greatly benefit the commission's prevention and outreach efforts, as well as enhance the efficiency of the compliance inspections. Improving the commission's technological capabilities would enable it to more easily and effectively identify trends and help target the agency's inspection and outreach services.

In addition to conducting inspections, the commission's six regional officers assist with administering commission certification examinations. A very large number of training facilities are located in the Northeast Texas region, so the activity level of that region is extremely high.

There has been an increase in the number of volunteer fire departments hiring paid personnel, thereby falling under the commission's regulations and requiring inspections. 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.

In recent legislative sessions, the commission has unsuccessfully sought additional FTEs to augment its staffing in the regional offices. Legislation requiring additional duties and activity levels necessitates the need for additional regional staff. In 2001, for example, SB 382 was passed which required compliance officers to inspect additional items at each regulated entity. Steady increases in the number of examinations given also create an ongoing impact.

TEXAS COMMISSION ON FIRE PROTECTION REGIONS



KEY ORGANIZATIONAL EVENTS AND AREAS OF CHANGE AND IMPACT

Regional boundaries are constantly being re-evaluated to distribute the workload more evenly across regional offices. Furthermore, in an effort to decentralize applicable agency functions, saving travel cost and staff time, 32 percent of the testing function has been incorporated into the duties of regional office staff. The agency is studying the feasibility of using regional testing centers and online resources to administer all certification tests.

FISCAL ASPECTS

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection was appropriated \$1,949,829 for FY12 and \$1,949,829 for FY13. The agency spends \$1.6 million a year in salaries for 31 FTEs. Total appropriations, minus salaries, leaves the agency only \$329,000 for travel, library purchases, training, computer purchases and maintenance, telephone, postage and other operating expenses.

By statute, every regulated fire protection entity is inspected during the biennium. This involves travel from one of six regional offices or the Austin headquarters to every regulated fire protection entity in the state. Budgetary limitations have the potential to prevent the agency from meeting statutory requirements and performance measures.

COMMISSION BUDGET

The 82nd Legislative Session's General Appropriations Act (GAA) defines the agency as a self-funded agency. This means the agency generates its funding primarily through revenue collected from examination and certification fees.

The GAA contains a rider, Rider 4 (Appropriations Limited to Revenue Collected), which stipulates the fees, fines and other revenue collected by the agency must cover, at a minimum, the cost of its appropriations. **Rider 4 also requires the agency to return to the General Fund approximately \$3.4 million over and above its appropriation during the FY12-FY13 biennium.** If the agency cannot generate this amount the Legislative Budget Board can direct the Comptroller's Office to reduce the agency's appropriation in order to cover the \$3.4 million. Thus, the agency's appropriated amount of approximately \$3.8 million over the biennium can be further reduced in order to meet the \$3.4 million requirement in Rider 4.

CAPITAL ASSET STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND IMPROVEMENTS

The commission headquarters office currently occupies 5,437 square feet on the first floor of the William B. Travis State Office Building (WBT). In June 2011, the Texas Facilities Commission (TFC) provided the agency with additional office space adjacent to its current office space in Suite 1-105.

AGENCY USE OF HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES (HUB)

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection's HUB contact has been instructed to buy from historically underutilized businesses whenever possible. All agency personnel have been instructed to use HUBs when purchasing within their delegated limits. In fiscal year 2011, all professional services contracts, 11.35 percent of commodity contracts and 56.38 percent of other service contracts were awarded to HUB vendors. In the first half of FY12, 19.87 percent of the agency purchases were from HUB vendors.

OPERATING BUDGET BY STRATEGY, FY12-13

G.A.A. Strategies	2012	2013
A.1.1. Fire Safety Information and Education Programs	\$65,778	\$65,778
B.1.1. Certify and Regulate Fire Service	\$1,321,851	\$1,321,851
C.1.1. Indirect Administration	\$562,200	\$562,200
TOTAL	\$1,949,829	\$1,949,829

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 served by air carriers with scheduled passenger-carrying operations operating aircraft designed for more than nine passenger seats and unscheduled passenger-carrying operations operating aircraft designed for at least 31 passenger seats.

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 state-level programs aimed at regulating aircraft fire fighting and rescue operations to be constantly reviewed and updated to stay abreast of this dynamic environment.

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 for Aircraft Rescue Fire Suppression certification was accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) in April 1999. There are 27 entities approved to provide aircraft rescue training and 31 entities that provide aircraft rescue fire suppression. This area of enforcement has placed increasing demands on the agency, and in the future could require more frequent inspections, tighter controls over operations, and more frequent updates in the state's aircraft rescue fire fighting curriculum and continuing education training programs.

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

These standards specify minimum competencies required for certification of individuals that respond to hazardous materials incidents. The standards specifically cover the competencies for first responders at the awareness and operational levels, hazardous materials technicians, incident commanders and other specialist employees. The commission has approved curricula for certifications for Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operational levels and Hazardous Materials Technician, effective January 1, 1999. (The commission's basic fire fighter certification addresses the initial training requirements for individuals by including training allowing the individual to obtain Hazardous Materials Awareness and Operational level. These two levels are pre-requisites for the more advanced Hazardous Materials Technician certification.) The commission's hazardous materials certification processes were accredited by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) in May 2000. The agency anticipates increasing responsibilities for state government in this area as responses to hazardous materials play an increasing role in communities' emergency response activities.

RESPIRATORY PROTECTION PROGRAM: 29 CFR 1910.134 (OSHA)

In 1998 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued new regulations dealing with the subject of 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 new respiratory protection standard affected the procedures and practices of every fire suppression organization that has personnel wearing respirators. The OSHA standard, while containing material mostly consistent with previously developed NFPA fire fighter safety standards, will be the new national standard. New 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 respiratory protection standard also covers one of the most important safety issues, “two-in/two-out.” The standard mandates that once an interior structure fire progresses past the incipient stage and fire fighters begin the interior attack, the atmosphere is assumed to be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH). As such, fire fighters engaged in interior structural fire fighting must wear SCBA, which must be NIOSH certified, NFPA compliant, have positive pressure, with a minimum duration of 30 minutes. Fire fighters engaged in interior structural fire fighting beyond the incipient stage must use NFPA-compliant SCBA, 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 OSHA standard requires at least one team of two or more properly trained and equipped fire fighters to be present outside the structure. This means a minimum of four fire fighters must be on the scene prior to initiating interior fire suppression operations. Of the two fire fighters that are outside the structure, one must perform accountability of 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 serving as incident commander, safety officer, or operator of fire apparatus. Both of the outside fire fighters must be able to provide 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. The only exemption to this section of the standard is if there is a known rescue to be performed.

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).

ASSISTANCE TO FIRE FIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM

The Grant Programs Directorate of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administers grants in cooperation with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). For fiscal year 2005, Congress reauthorized the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) for an additional five years through 2010. The primary goal of the 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 fighters and other first responders 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

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

FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY GRANTS (FP&S)

The fire prevention and safety grants are part of the Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and are under the purview of the Grant Programs Directorate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Fire Prevention and Safety 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

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

In October 2001, the President of the United States established the Office of Homeland Security by Executive Order. Its function is to coordinate efforts to detect, prepare for, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks and natural disasters within the United States. The agency coordinates all federal, state, and local counter-terrorism efforts. On March 1, 2003, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. As a result, FEMA became part of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security. On October 1, 2005, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) was transferred within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from FEMA to the newly created Preparedness Directorate. The agency became the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) again on March 21, 2007 but still remains in the Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages the National Flood Insurance Program.

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 was retained and continued by the 82nd Texas Legislature. However, with the state budget crisis, the legislature reduced the spending authority for the program for FY12-13. The annual grant budget for the program in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 is \$7 million (a decrease from \$23 million in previous years). With the reduced funding, the Texas Forest Service has made the decision to focus on grant categories that prominently emphasize fire fighter safety, such as training, tuition and personal protective equipment (PPE). Grant assistance will be offered for a fire department's cost-share portion of a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) apparatus grant. The grant funds will be limited. The Texas Forest Service receives a limited amount of federal funds to assist local fire departments. In previous years, these funds were used to provide equipment grants. Grants are now awarded for the purchase of structural personal protective equipment (PPE) and wildland PPE. 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.

RURAL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

This program was created by HB 3667 77(R). The program is a grant program, not an insurance program, administered by the Texas Forest Service. It provides grants for Texas fire fighters to obtain worker's compensation and death and disability insurance. Funds for the program are derived from a two percent tax on the retail sale of fireworks. The program provides insurance grants for more than 400 fire departments and 11,000 fire fighters each year. Grants under the program are available only to chartered volunteer fire departments operated by their members on a not-for-profit basis, including departments exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code Section 501 (a) and 501 (c) (3); and chartered part-paid/part-volunteer departments operated on a not-for-profit basis, however, the number of paid members must be fewer than 20. Departments with 21 or more paid members are not eligible.

All eligible departments must participate in a fire fighter certification program administered under Texas Government Code §419.071 by the commission, or by the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas (SFFMA), or by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG).

HELPING HANDS PROGRAM

This program was created by HB 680 75(R). The program provides liability relief to industry, business, cities and others to donate surplus fire and emergency equipment to the Texas Forest Service. Donated equipment is then distributed by the Texas Forest Service to volunteer fire departments across the state. Prior to passage of this legislation, companies routinely destroyed surplus fire equipment because they could not afford the liability exposure involved with anyone continuing to use these items. Pressure bottles for breathing apparatus were cut in half and regulators buried. Prospective gear and hose were cut apart and fire trucks were dismantled and sold for scrap. Most of this equipment had many years of good use left; the risk of litigation for

those wanting to make donations to volunteer fire departments was just too great. Now departments who are interested in requesting equipment through this program submit an application for rural fire defense assistance to the Rural Fire Defense Section of the Texas Forest Service – Fire Control Department. Requests are filled as equipment becomes available. All equipment assigned becomes the property of the volunteer fire department. The legislation requires all SCBA to be certified by the Texas Forest Service. There is a small certification fee for each SCBA assigned and a limit of four SCBA provided per application. There are no other charges associated with the program. Departments are contacted to arrange payment of certification fees as their specific requests are approved. Since 1997, the Helping Hands Program has received more than \$18.5 million in donated equipment, including 171 vehicles and 3,848 breathing apparatus.

FIRESAFE PROGRAM

This program provides low-cost wildland and structural protective clothing to rural and small community fire departments. The Texas Forest Service purchases protective clothing in volume in order to pass along bulk-purchase savings. The gear is then sold to fire departments, which benefit from the savings. Through this program, eligible fire departments can get quality protective clothing at savings of 30 to 40 percent.

In 2005, the Firesafe Program processed more than \$1.05 million in protective clothing and gear. Wildland fire equipment, including personal protective equipment, hose, nozzles and other water handling accessories, is included in this program. This equipment is designed for wildland fires and should not be used on other types of fires, such as structure or industrial fires.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA) WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM

This is a pilot project for certain Texas fire departments. The program will allow qualified Texas fire departments to purchase fire equipment directly from the U. S. General Services Administration (GSA). 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 as 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. This 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 Forest Service. Upon receipt and approval of a signed MOU, the Texas 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 established by the 74th Texas legislature in 1995. The program provides low-cost vehicle liability insurance to qualified volunteer fire departments. Vehicle coverage is offered at levels of \$100,000 per person for bodily injury up to a maximum of \$300,000 per occurrence, and \$100,000 for property damage up to a maximum of \$100,000 per occurrence. Through this program, the Texas Forest Service provides low-cost vehicle liability insurance at a greatly reduced cost. Since inception, the program has saved fire departments an estimated \$3 million in premiums.

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. The premium charge is \$150 per vehicle per year. All premiums go to support the program. Safe driving and favorable claims experience help to keep premiums low year after year.

The insured VFD must agree to implement and comply with a risk management and loss prevention program. Vehicle maintenance records and driver records must be maintained. Authorized drivers must be at least 18 years of age and possess a valid driver's license. The Texas Forest Service will inspect VFD vehicles and records.

SELF-EVALUATION AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The State Office of Risk Management (SORM) conducted a Risk Management Program Review of the agency on June 28, 2011. 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 conducted its annual Internal Risk Assessment in March 2012. 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.

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.

CURRENT STATUS

The agency's certification section has met and continues to meet statutory requirements for the issuance of certifications and renewal of departmental personnel as prescribed by strategic plan performance measures. The certification staff serves local government entities regulated by the commission.

The agency's compliance section program has also managed to meet statutory requirements. Insights gained include effects of staffing levels on quality of service performed and the need for long-term planning to minimize the effects of unavoidable and unexpected resource depletion. Specific programmatic changes include decentralization and redistribution of workloads.

Since 1997, the process of testing fire protection personnel, which is a primary function of the testing and training program, has been awarded 17 accreditation levels from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC). These levels are Fire Fighter I, Hazardous Material Awareness, Fire Fighter II, Hazardous Material Operations, Airport Fire Fighter, Driver Operator, Driver/Operator – Pumper, Hazardous Materials Technician, Fire Officer I, Fire Officer II, Fire Investigator, Fire Inspector I, Fire Inspector II, Plan Examiner I, Fire Instructor I, Fire Instructor II, and Fire Instructor III. IFSAC's mission is "to increase the level of professionalism of the fire service through accreditation of those entities who work with fire service training and/or education." The accreditation process, driven by national and international fire service personnel, provides a gateway for individuals to have their certification and testing recognized by other IFSAC organizations. IFSAC certificate-issuing government agencies follow the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, which serve as a framework for standardized curriculum and test development.

KEY OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The commission's enabling legislation limits its regulatory authority to fire fighter health, safety, and education. The Texas fire service is ever-changing and expanding with new demands, affecting both human resources and work environments. Fiscal caps, FTE caps, and statutory limitations restrict the ability of the commission to serve the entire spectrum of the fire service population. The passage of SB 382 in 2001 required Texas fire departments to develop new standard operating procedures as well as new inspection and maintenance procedures for personnel protective equipment (PPE) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). Verifying these new procedures required the compliance inspectors to spend more time reviewing records during the department's biennial inspection. Increases in the number of departments and certified personnel also increased the time to perform the inspections. In FY 2001 the agency performed 537 inspections and there were 18,378 certified personnel. In 2003 the agency reallocated resources and hired an additional compliance inspector to help meet the demand. In FY 2009 the agency performed 721 inspections/investigations and there were 28,550 certified personnel. During the 81st legislative session, the agency received funding for two additional compliance inspectors to meet the increasing demand and to meet new requirements for compiling and analyzing injury data, in addition to receiving and investigating complaints and violations.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) develops consensus standards relating to the manufacturing and maintenance of PPE and SCBA as well as minimum training requirements for certification of personnel. The commission has adopted the NFPA Standards for its certifications. The NFPA revises standards on a rotating five-year cycle and the commission must review its curriculum to ensure it is in compliance with the current version. The agency's compliance inspectors must also ensure the fire department's PPE and SCBA continue to meet applicable current NFPA Standards.

Texas has always required a high level of fire service training. Now, with the addition of the IFSAC accreditations, the number of individuals coming from out-of-state or other countries to participate in training programs at Texas-certified training facilities has increased dramatically. Military personnel and agencies from other countries are seeking Texas-certified training facilities to get this type of training. The commission's curriculum and course approval staff is also being asked by in-state personnel to provide curricula and test banks in additional disciplines and higher levels of certification. Technological advances in the area of long-distance data exchange, accountability and security afford opportunities for improvement within the compliance, certification and testing programs.

The testing program has increased its efficiency by increasing the number of examinations given by compliance officers in the regional offices. Rules have been implemented to utilize designated testing sites throughout the state to accommodate the increase in workload. The commission currently offers 34 state certifications and 16 International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC) seals. The commission, in its efforts to become more efficient, is exploring the ability to administer examinations on-line. However, a major concern with automation is the security of the test questions. A lack of security would threaten the commission's certification creditability as well as IFSAC accreditation levels. Security measures are being addressed with the goal of implementation of outsourced on-line testing in the near future.

WORKING WITH LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ENTITIES FOR SUCCESS

To provide required services, the agency works with multiple agencies, at all levels, in providing certification of fire protection personnel. Services could improve by increasing the opportunities to meet the customer face-to-face in the form of training/evaluations, seminars, meetings, and conferences thereby providing an environment to foster the exchange of ideas, philosophies, technologies, and an open forum for the fire fighters of the State of Texas. Various regional training facilities have opened their doors to the commission to set up regional examination sites in order to meet the increasing testing workload. Academies provide field examiners to assist in evaluating the performance skill portion of the testing process.

Establishing and maintaining lines of communication and cooperation with other regulatory agencies will minimize overlap of responsibility and maximize use of resources. Education of regulated local government entities maximizes compliance and minimizes conflict, which can result in more efficient operations. The commission is a regular contributor to the SFFMA monthly e-magazine and biannual publication. The commission also regularly contributes articles to the Texas Fire Chiefs' "Friday Report" and publishes an electronic newsletter for regulated entities along with its Facebook, Avoid Injury blog, and website pages.

KEY RESOURCES AVAILABLE

The commission and advisory committees provide critical local input into the commission's policymaking process. Ad-hoc subcommittees are sometimes created to address specific needs. In 2003, the commission created a Fitness & Wellness committee to review the current state of fitness and wellness of the fire service in Texas and to recommend potential actions to the commission. The committee consisted of volunteers with knowledge and experience in wellness programs, exercise programs, labor/management relations, municipal budgeting, diet, fitness and disability law. In 2005, the Fire Service Instructor committee was created to assist the curriculum and testing committee in developing a new fire instructor curriculum. In 2007, an ad-hoc committee was created to assist in developing a new aircraft rescue fire fighting curriculum. In 2009, ad-hoc committees were created to assist in updating the curriculum for investigator, inspector and hazardous material technician. In 2011, the Fire Officer III and Fire Officer IV ad-hoc committee was formed to develop a Fire Officer III and Fire Officer IV Certification curricula. The Fire Officer ad-hoc committee held its first meeting in January 2012. Also, in 2012 the commission sought volunteers to form a Wildland Firefighter certification ad-hoc committee to develop a Wildland Firefighter certification curriculum.

These committees consist of fire service professionals with knowledge and subject-matter expertise who volunteer their time to review and update the material to the current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards.

Highly qualified personnel are needed to develop and maintain curriculum and test questions and to meet the demand for additional IFSAC accreditation levels. However, reliance on volunteer committees requires asking individuals and local governments to donate their own time and resources. Development of more affordable and portable communication and data exchange equipment promises improvement in communications and personnel efficiency. Several other state agencies also provide critical resources both to the fire service and to the commission.

EMPLOYEE ATTITUDES

Employee attitudes have been affected by state budget reductions over the past few legislative sessions. During the last legislative session the agency saw a reduction in both fiscal and human resources. The number of FTEs was reduced from 40 to 31 positions and funding was reduced approximately \$3 million for the 2012-2013 biennium. Continued reductions will likely decrease employee morale and increase apprehensiveness regarding the agency's ability to meet growing customer demands.

Further, ongoing and projected increases in workload demands are a major area of concern for employees and management. It is the desire of the commission that legislators recognize the need to at least maintain the current level of service throughout the state, helping to ensure the health and safety of the citizens of Texas. All agency personnel are dedicated to improving safety and health within the fire service, and clearly demonstrate the desire to lead the fire service to compliance by providing necessary information and assistance. Agency employees continue to be involved in suggesting and implementing process improvements.

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

With the understanding that the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is now a self-funded agency and is responsible for paying for all its operational and administrative costs, including but not limited to direct, indirect and costs associated with the operation of the agency, the agency now includes indirect costs in its strategic plan and performance measures. The indirect costs now included in the calculations for the total cost include legal fees, employee benefits, facility costs (construction, rental, purchase, etc.) where applicable, and bonds and debt service the agency may incur in the performance of contracts and daily business. By including these indirect costs, the agency is providing a more comprehensive and accurate portrayal of its business operations.

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 from fire departments and other entities 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 certificate holders 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. Pass rate.

02-01-01.02. Number of individuals certified.

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

GOAL 03: INDIRECT ADMINISTRATION

With the understanding that the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is now a self-funded agency and is responsible for paying for all its operational and administrative costs, including but not limited to direct, indirect and costs associated with the operation of the agency, the agency now includes indirect costs in its strategic plan and performance measures. The indirect costs now included in the calculations for the total cost include legal fees, employee benefits, facility costs (construction, rental, purchase, etc.) where applicable, and bonds and debt service the agency may incur in the performance of contracts and daily business. By including these indirect costs, the agency is providing a more comprehensive and accurate portrayal of its business operations.

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 three major projects during the next biennium:

- Data Management System Rebuild: FIDO and FARM.
- Online payments.
- Online testing.

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 rebuild: FARM and FIDO.

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency has been working for several years to migrate its data out of Microsoft Access to SQL Server. As it progresses, the agency is also switching from Access' client/server interface to a web-based front end. FIDO (Firefighters: Information and Departments Online) is a customer-facing suite of applications designed to automate several paper-intensive processes. FARM (FIDO Administration and Records Management) is the internal-facing companion suite of applications that allow agency staff to work with the data.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Online testing – In progress.

Online payments – In progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The database management system rebuild will primarily support the agency's certification, testing and compliance 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

P2 – Data Management

P3 – Data Sharing

P4 – Infrastructure

P5 – Legacy Applications

P6 – Mobility

P7 – Network

P9 – Security and Privacy

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Connect – the initiative will replace antiquated, paper-based processes with online interfaces for all certifications and renewals, as well as applications for scheduling tests and reviewing test results.

Innovate – The agency is working with the Department of Public Safety to enable better data-sharing for required criminal history background checks. The agency is pursuing partnerships with the Comptroller’s Office and Texas.gov to enable it to accept online payments. The agency is also working with outside vendors to deliver its certification examinations online.

Trust – One of the primary goals of this project is to ensure that the data for which the agency is responsible is maintained in a robust, secure and modern back-end database. Users will manage more of their own data, thus increasing transparency and accountability. All new applications minimize the need for inputting text, and all interactions with the database are pre-defined and parameterized whenever possible. The agency is also developing tools to perform address and SSN validation to help ensure better data.

Deliver – As a client/server system, the current DMS is tied to a network-based solution; migration to a web-based solution will provide our customers with the ability to interact with their information through a variety of devices. Another important benefit is that it will allow the agency’s field officers to connect with real-time data at the fire departments they inspect, reducing redundancy and increasing responsiveness.

7. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

The DMS rebuild will greatly increase the 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 should increase over time as more of our customers learn that they can manage a great deal of their own information. (Ironically, some customers are less satisfied – they liked the printed certificates we used to mail! We will address that issue over time.) One of the primary complaints of our customers is that we are unable to accept online payments; this initiative will help get us closer to achieving that objective.

SQL Server is much more secure and robust than Access. The agency has implemented numerous controls for referential integrity, frequent backups and database security.

The agency’s 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.

In the longer term, the agency has considered several open-source alternatives to SQL Server, and may continue to explore these options as the costs for back-end technologies continue to rise. This initiative is foundational for any such future moves, in that the data will be much more granular and “portable” from an HTML/SQL Server environment than from a client/server environment.

8. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

Budget constraints and lack of human resources continue to impede the agency’s ability to make progress on the initiative. In August 2009 an evaluation by ObjectWin, an information resources consulting firm, estimated that 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 — the agency’s entire IT staff is three FTEs).

Despite this lack of resources, the agency's IT staff has been able to make an enormous amount of progress in two key areas. The first, Injury Reporting, was not included in the original scope of the project, but was imposed by the commission's Sunset legislation. The new requirement proved helpful, however, since it required regulated entities to create online accounts. Virtually every fire department in the state now has access to the online data management system.

The agency has automated a large number of its formerly paper-based systems. For example, fire departments can now review and reconcile their renewal records online. (They cannot, as yet, pay their renewal invoices online.) The agency is working with the Comptroller's Office to automate entity payments. The projected launch date for online renewal payments is the first quarter of fiscal year 2013.

Individual fire fighters can review their own certification history and print their own certificates. Virtually all of the agency's mission-critical data has been migrated to a SQL Server backend. However, the front-end process and procedure changes and application development for certain critical components (such as testing and compliance inspections) have not yet been addressed. The agency has signed a customer agreement with Texas.gov and intends to move toward online payments, however, it cannot implement an online solution until it re-engineers all of its business processes, from the initial application to the issuance of the certificate.

The agency does not intend at this point to collect credit card information from customers, but will partner with the Comptroller and Texas.gov to address this critical customer need.

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.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Database management system rebuild – In progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The online payment 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

P2 – Data Management

P4 – Infrastructure

P5 – Legacy Applications

P6 – Mobility

P7 – Network

P9 – Security and Privacy

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Connect – the online payment initiative should provide more options for regulated departments and individual certificate holders to pay any commission fees.

Innovate – the agency intends to partner with the Comptroller's Office to receive online payments from local government entities (cities, towns, counties, etc.) and with Texas.gov to receive payments from individual certificate holders and non-governmental regulated entities.

Trust – the Comptroller and Texas.gov have mature technologies in place to ensure the safety and integrity of payment information. The agency does not have the resources or facilities to accept or

secure online payments (specifically, credit card or other bank information), so it will rely on existing state systems to deliver this service to its customers.

Deliver – Online payments have come to be an expectation, rather than a novelty, among the citizens the agency serves. Moving to online payments should greatly increase the ease with which agency customers can pay their fees, as well as virtually eliminating the agency’s workload in opening, securing and depositing checks and money orders.

7. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

This initiative addresses a primary need of our customers. The agency anticipates 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.

8. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

The agency’s database management system rebuild is 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 that the staff uses to interact with the data must be rebuilt as web-based front-end applications.

ONLINE TESTING

1. INITIATIVE NAME

Online testing

2. INITIATIVE DESCRIPTION

The agency has initiated a project to administer its certification examinations online.

3. ASSOCIATED PROJECTS

Database management system rebuild - In progress.

Online payments - In progress.

4. AGENCY OBJECTIVES

The online testing 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

P2 – Data Management

P4 – Infrastructure

P5 – Legacy Applications

P6 – Mobility

P7 – Network

P9 – Security and Privacy

6. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Connect – the initiative should provide more testing sites for citizens seeking to take a commission certification examination.

Innovate – the agency intends to leverage technology to ensure that its customers can take certification examinations in more locations and with greater flexibility in scheduling.

Trust – the agency intends to partner with a well-established private service provider to ensure exam integrity. The initiative should also expedite grading and posting of test results.

Deliver – Online testing has come to be an expectation, rather than a novelty, among agency customers.. Moving to an online environment should greatly increase the agency’s capacity to deliver tests more often and in more locations.

7. ANTICIPATED BENEFITS

Exam administration is one of the agency’s most robust functions. The agency has earned accreditation in many disciplines from the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC), which ensures that the agency’s testing processes meets internationally recognized standards.

However, the current business processes are heavily resource-dependent. The agency prints all of its tests and delivers them securely to testing sites, along with Scantron answer sheets, pencils and 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. The initiative should also help expedite the grading and posting of test results.

8. CAPABILITIES OR BARRIERS

The agency’s database management system rebuild is critical to building the capacity for online testing. The agency’s 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.

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 that the staff uses to interact with the data must be rebuilt as web-based front-end applications.

The agency has begun to prototype several of the testing section’s sub-processes, such as its “course approval” form. (The course approval process is the first step; all courses delivered with the goal of leading to a certification exam must be approved by the commission. When a provider schedules a course, the agency must coordinate closely with the provider to ensure that the state exam is delivered upon course completion.)

The agency initially intends to partner with a private online testing service to ensure that exams are administered securely. The agency anticipates launching online tests beginning in December 2012.

APPENDICES

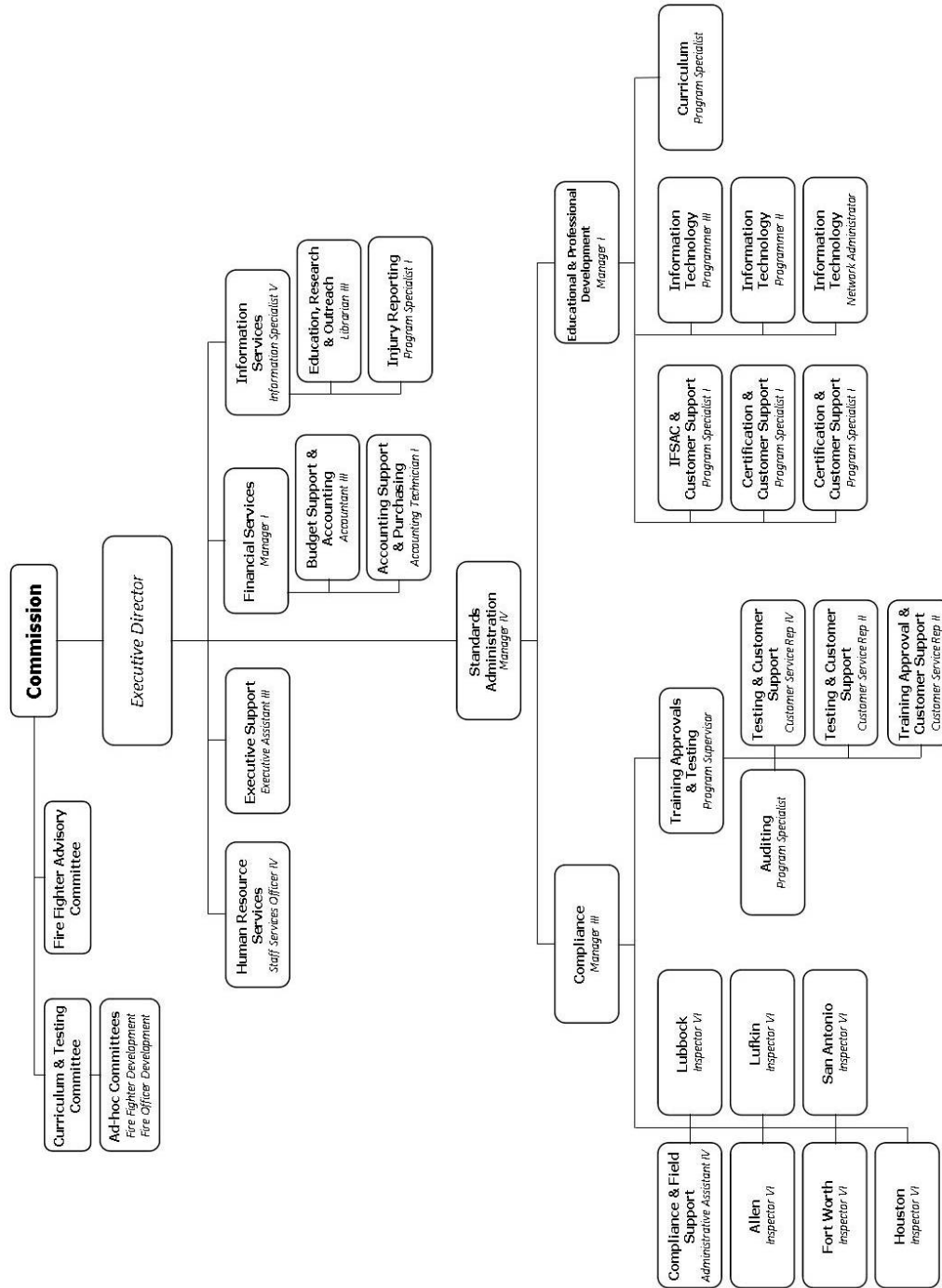
APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF AGENCY'S PLANNING PROCESS

Input on elements of the strategic plan is continuously requested and received from commission members, advisory committee members, division directors, program team leaders, other agency employees, and from the fire service. This input is carefully considered and incorporated into the strategic plan as appropriate. The agency initiated a business process redesign project to standardize and facilitate staff elements of the internal strategic planning process.

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



APPENDIX C: FIVE-YEAR PROJECTIONS FOR OUTCOMES

Outcomes	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
02-01.01. Number of inspected certificate holders with uncorrected violations.	95	95	95	95	95
04-01.01 Percent of total dollar value of purchasing contracts awarded to HUBs.	10	10	10	10	10

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 during the reporting period from fire departments and other entities.

Purpose/Importance: The number of requests for library resources reflects the growing awareness of the Texas fire service and the general public regarding the availability of training aids and other library materials. This information provides data for the library's long-range planning and purchases. It also emphasizes the need for automation of library procedures for increased efficiency.

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

Method of Calculation: Total of the requests.

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 reflects the growing awareness of the Texas fire service and general public regarding the availability of training aids and research materials in the information resource center. This information provides data for the information resource center's long-range planning and purchases. It also emphasizes the need for automation of information resource center procedures for increased efficiency.

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 for information resource center.

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 CERTIFICATE HOLDERS WITH
UNCORRECTED VIOLATIONS**

Short Definition: The total number of certificate-holding individuals and 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 individuals and 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 inspected certificate-holding individuals and 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 certificate-holding individuals and 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: Total expenditures for activities related to facility inspections during the reporting period divided by the number of facilities that were inspected.

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 funds expended 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: Economic factors will influence the cost of travel including but not limited to fuel, vehicle rental and hotel fees. The distance traveled to the entity, the number of violations found and the size of the entity being inspected will have an effect on the average cost of inspections.

Calculation Type: Non-Cumulative.

New Measure: Yes.

Desired Performance: Lower than Target.

EXPLANATORY 02-01-01.01: 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 on an annual basis as fire protection personnel, 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 that is stored in 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 may 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. This measure demonstrates the commission's efforts to meet statutory requirements.

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 count of the number of regulated entities inspected during the reporting period.

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 certified individuals 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, 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>With the understanding that the Texas Commission on Fire Protection is now a self-funded agency and is responsible for paying for all its operational and administrative costs, including but not limited to direct, indirect and costs associated with the operation of the agency, the agency now includes indirect costs in its strategic plan and performance measures. The indirect costs now included in the calculations for the total cost include legal fees, employee benefits, facility costs (construction, rental, purchase, etc.) where applicable, and bonds and debt service the agency may incur in the performance of contracts and daily business. By including these indirect costs, the agency is providing a more comprehensive and accurate portrayal of its business operations.</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 in three divisions: the executive office, financial services, and fire service standards and certification.

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; oversees information resource management; and develops and executes the agency operating budget and procedures. The **Financial Services** team provides internal support to the agency, including accounting, budgeting, purchasing and other staff service functions. The **Fire Service Standards and Certification** division administers the commission's fire service certification, compliance, testing, curriculum development, and fire protection resource library programs. The functions of the division include:

- Regulating paid fire protection personnel, fire departments, and training facilities.
- Performing biennial inspections of fire departments, local government agencies providing fire protection, and institutions or facilities conducting training for fire protection personnel or recruits.
- Establishing minimum curriculum requirements, evaluating courses, and administering examinations for certification as fire protection personnel.
- Establishing minimum requirements and evaluates courses for higher levels of fire protection personnel certification.
- Enforcing standards for protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus.
- Administering a voluntary certification and regulation program for qualified individuals not connected with local governments or volunteer fire departments.
- Administering a voluntary certification and regulation program for volunteer fire protection personnel, fire departments, and training facilities.
- Enforcing continuing education programs for all levels of fire protection personnel.
- Administering the Ernest A. Emerson Fire Protection Resource Library.
- Compiling information and data on fire protection personnel injuries and presenting data to the commission to develop recommendations to reduce personnel injuries.
- Tracking and analyzing complaint and violation data.

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

Although modifications in the agency's statute to enhance fire fighter safety could occur, the commission does not anticipate significant changes to its mission, strategies, and goals over the next five years. However, consolidation of state fire service-related functions could provide more consistent and better customer service for the citizens of Texas.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

CUSTOMER DEMANDS

There is a continuing increase in the number of fire departments converting from volunteer fire departments into "combination" fire departments with both paid and volunteer staff. These departments are hiring personnel to meet the needs resulting from growth and development within their communities. Existing departments have also increased staffing levels, causing an increase in the number of departments and personnel the agency must inspect. The number of certified fire service personnel increased by 29 percent between fiscal years 2007 and 2009. The agency anticipates a six percent annual increase in the number of certified personnel for the next five years.

The Texas Commission on Fire Protection currently has 18 curricula in place. This increase was based upon demands from the fire service. The agency is considering the development of additional curricula, including Fire Officer III, Fire Officer IV, Incident Safety Officer, Wildland Fire Fighter (basic and intermediate) and Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist. The commission will also be considering additional certifications for special rescue areas and the continuation of Wildland Fire Fighter advance levels as well as those for the Safety Officer series. The test administration and course approval staff have handled a 68 percent increase in course approvals over the past five years (FY05-FY09). In FY10 the agency received funding for two additional test administration staff and reallocated another agency position to that section. Since that time, the test administration program has lost the two FTE positions it received in FY10.

Within the last four years, test administration personnel have faced a 35 percent increase in the number of tests administered. To meet the increased demand, the agency has implemented alternative methods of test administration to include using compliance inspectors, using college testing centers and other similar professional sources, and scheduling regional testing centers. These centers may help meet the present demand; however, the agency must continue to research alternative delivery methods. One method of delivery that the commission is developing is on-line testing. On-line testing is targeted for the fourth quarter of the current calendar year (2012).

The agency's compliance inspectors currently administer approximately 32 percent of the commission's examinations. They continue to perform legislatively required inspections and investigate complaints lodged by concerned citizens and fire department personnel. They also assist in monitoring and auditing training facilities and instruction programs. Newly adopted rules have caused the inspectors to spend more time performing department inspections, as there are more areas of concern.

In 2009 the compliance section became responsible for gathering and evaluating information and data on fire protection personnel injuries and making recommendations to the commission for

reducing fire protection personnel injuries. Compliance inspectors continue to assist in fire fighter Line of Duty Death investigations. (While these investigations fall under the direction of the State Fire Marshal, commission compliance inspectors provide assistance through their expertise in the areas of personnel protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus).

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 organization is designed to address the increased demands placed on the agency’s limited human and financial resources, while maintaining the existing level of service to the public.

CURRENT WORKFORCE PROFILE

SUPPLY ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the Comptroller’s Office Personnel System suggest the following Workforce Demographics (as of June 2012) for the agency:

Gender:	Male	64.52%
	Female	35.48%
Age:	60+	16.13%
	50-59	38.71%
	40-49	38.71%
	30-39	3.23%
	20-29	3.23%
Race:	African-American	16.13%
	Hispanic	9.68%
	White	74.19%
	Asian	0.00%

APPROXIMATE AVERAGE STATE EMPLOYMENT TENURE

Average state employment tenure for TCFP employees is 10.1 years. This figure is based on state service data derived from the Comptroller’s Office Personnel System.

APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES ELIGIBLE TO RETIRE WITHIN FIVE YEARS

16.13 percent of agency employees will be eligible to retire based on data provided by the Comptroller’s Office Personnel System. This projection is based only on comparing the employee’s age and years of state service against the Employees Retirement System’s (ERS) “Rule of 80.” ERS does not provide information on employee creditable state service to any agency. Retirement eligibility projection is made upon an assumption that the entirety of employee’s state service is creditable service toward ERS retirement rules.

The following table shows the agency breakdown by percentage of its workforce (as of FY10) 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, & Administration (A)	10.34%	13.50%	50.61%	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%
Professional (P)	11.27%	15.66%	55.90%	15.38%	7.69%	23.08%
Technical (T)	14.39%	21.65%	53.74%	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%
Administrative Staff (C)	12.7%	31.9%	67.1%	0.00%	16.67%	83.33%
Skilled Craft (S)	7.81%	24.48%	4.88%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Service and Maintenance (M) Includes Protective Services & Para-Professionals	29.25%	25.42%	51.39%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

The agency's turnover rate has historically been lower than the overall state rate for the past few years as shown in the table below. However, the loss of positions in FY11 severely impacted the agency's turnover rate as well as its operations.

Fiscal Year	State	TCFP
2011	16.8%	9.67%
2010	14.6%	34.21%
2009	14.4%	9.7%
2008	17.3%	12.4%
2007	17.4%	18.75%
2006	15.8%	12.5%
2005	16.6%	12.6%
2004	14.8%	13.0%
2003	16.6%	20.0%

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 expects 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 productive demands. Computer software 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 Personnel Manual 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 not be able to meet all increases in customer demands over the next five years through productivity increases alone. As the agency loses employees through attrition, changes in business processes, and budget reductions, additional employees will be needed.

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. However, technology will not address all the workforce issues and will only serve as another tool in the overall plan for the agency and its workforce utilization. Additional FTEs will be needed to address the shortfalls created by budgetary restraints as well as to address the demand placed on the agency due to population growth experienced by the State of Texas. In addition to population growth, the demand for services by the fire service is constantly increasing. This demand is driven by new fire protection service personnel being added and the creation of new entities, as well as the ongoing public need for professional fire protection. The agency estimates that it currently requires an additional five FTEs.

Changes that have occurred in the recent past through legislative action have contributed to the workload of the agency. To date this workload has been managed without additional FTEs. In fact the agency has seen a reduction in FTEs to the point that this can no longer be overlooked. Any legislative action that increases the workload will require an increase in FTEs. The mere fact that technology may save some time and increase efficiency in some areas does not reduce the workload; in many cases, it merely shifts functions from manual processes to "help desk" tasks. For example, the cutting of accounting staff with the hope that improvements to statewide accounting systems will increase efficiency has not always been the case. Cutting accounting staff while increasing the number for field staff and others who travel for outreach programs does not diminish the amount of data entries that must be submitted. This is a negative impact and one that the agency will seek to address by balancing work loads, using technology efficiently, and improving the overall business model.

CRITICAL FUNCTIONS THAT MUST BE PERFORMED TO ACHIEVE THE STRATEGIC PLAN

All current functions of the agency are critical to achievement of the strategic plan. As business processes are redesigned, the agency expects essential job functions to change or shift in importance for some positions. As discussed in other areas of this plan, as the agency matures, adapts and grows to meet the demands of the 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.

GAP ANALYSIS

Current employees do not lack the skills necessary to perform their essential job functions. However, as the agency redesigns business processes and loses employees through attrition, some positions could change significantly, requiring targeted recruiting and/or skills training.

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) since 1994. In 2009 the survey was modified to reflect the update of the survey from the SOE to the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE). The agency uses the survey to analyze its organizational effectiveness, and develop strategies to address identified weaknesses.

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.

