

**Department of Homeland Security/FEMA
U.S. Fire Administration
National Fire Academy Board of Visitors
Meeting Agenda
October 7-8, 2005
Building H, Room 300**

Attendees:

The following National Fire Academy Board of Visitors (NFA BOV) members were present for the meeting:

Dr. Robert S. Fleming (Chairperson)
Professor, Rowan University
1406 Heather Lane
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19380

Chief Donald R. Oliver (Vice Chairperson)
Wilson Fire/Rescue Services
307 West Hines Street
Wilson, North Carolina 27893

Ms. Helen Johnson
Executive Director
State Firemen's and Fire Marshals'
Association of Texas
4450 Frontier Trail
Austin, Texas 78756

Chief Art Cota
Shasta College Fire Department
11555 Old Oregon Trail
Redding, California 96003

Mr. Gary Tokle
National Fire Protection Association
1 Batterymarch Park
Quincy, Massachusetts 02169-7471

The following members were not present for the meeting:

Chief Warren McDaniels (Retired)
7097 W. Tamaron Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70128

Captain Jack Reall
President, Columbus Firefighters Union,
IAFF 67
1380 Dublin Road, Suite 103
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dr. Sandy Bogucki
Associate Professor
Section of Emergency Medicine
Yale University School of Medicine
464 Congress Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut 06519-1315

FEMA/National Fire Academy (NFA)/U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) staff in attendance:

Mr. David Paulison, Acting Director, FEMA (via teleconference)
Mr. Charles Dickinson, USFA Deputy Administrator
Dr. Denis Onieal, Superintendent, NFA
Dr. Kirby Kiefer, Deputy Superintendent, NFA
Ms. Terry Gladhill, Program Analyst, NFA
Mr. Bob Bennett, Training Specialist, NFA
Ms. Cindy Wivell, Secretary, NFA
Mr. Ron Face, Director, NETC Management, Operations and Support
Mr. Doug Williams, Training Specialist, National Fire Programs (NFP) Response Section
Mr. Woody Stratton, Fire Program Specialist, NFP Citizen & Community Preparedness Section

October 7

CONVENE BOV MEETING/WELCOME

Dr. Robert Fleming, Chair, Board of Visitors

Dr. Robert Fleming convened the meeting and proceeded to review the agenda. He stated that three BOV members would not be present for the meeting due to the hurricane disasters our country is facing.

Mr. Charlie Dickinson discussed the hurricane disasters and the road to recovery.

Dr. Denis Onieal, along with Mr. Dickinson, thank the many men and women of the emergency services and the Fire Administration who worked to help get through this disaster of biblical proportions. The USFA FIREHIRE call center and how the staff handled the drastic changes in their everyday jobs/lives were acknowledged. Community Relations has indicated that they never want to through a disaster without firefighter help. Through the Congressional Fire Services Institute, Dr. Onieal is trying to get a ribbon commissioned for firefighters who met the call in response to Hurricane Katrina, as well as Hurricane Rita.

Mr. David Paulison joined the meeting by phone, and relayed that Secretary Michael Chertoff will attend Sunday's Memorial Service for the 2004 fallen firefighters. As a result of becoming the Acting Director for FEMA, Mr. Paulison has had to cancel out of speaking engagements. He has had great support from FEMA employees, and asked for the BOV's support. The plan is for USFA to still move to the Preparedness Directorate; the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) will remain with FEMA. There is a Chief Medical Officer position within Preparedness held by Dr. Jeffrey Runge. Mr. Dickinson suggested inviting him to the next BOV meeting.

Chief Art Cota commended Mr. Paulison on his testimony on C-SPAN. On behalf of the Texas fire service, Ms. Helen Johnson thanked him for his leadership in assisting their State.

Dr. Fleming discussed the topic of curriculum and the conversation he had with Mr. Paulison regarding the confidence the NFA BOV has that courses will be current and timely

with the leadership of Mr. Dickinson, Dr. Onieal, and Dr. Cortez Lawrence, Director, National Fire Programs. Mr. Dickinson reviewed some of the reasons for reducing course length:

- 1) Students for the most part are not senior leadership.
- 2) Local budgets do not allow for folks to be gone very long.
- 3) Currently the campus runs at about 68 percent of its occupancy capacity.
- 4) Shorter courses will increase demographics.

ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS

Dr. Fleming opened the floor for officer nominations for the coming year.

Ms. Johnson nominated Dr. Fleming to serve as chair, seconded by Mr. Gary Togle. All were in favor.

Mr. Togle nominated Ms. Johnson to serve as vice chair, seconded by Chief Art Cota. All were in favor.

There no further nominations. Dr. Fleming thanked Chief Don Oliver for serving as Vice Chairman and looks forward to his continued involvement.

FOLLOWUP FROM JULY MEETING

Mr. Togle motioned for the July meeting minutes to be accepted. There was a second given by Ms. Johnson. All were in favor. Meeting minutes were accepted as presented.

CREDENTIALING REPORT: Chief Art Cota and Mr. Bob Bennett

Dr. Denis Onieal gave a historical summary of the Credentialing project. Because the USFA Policy and Program Committee had not yet had members appointed, Dr. Onieal sought and received approval to move forward with the Credentialing project by having it become a subcommittee of the NFA BOV. Chief Cota and Mr. Bennett presented an overview on Credentialing, along with the handout of the revised final draft of the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System Concept and Recommendations. Chief Cota attended a meeting on this project on September 26-27 as the BOV representative. During the September 26-27 meeting the Working Group voted unanimously to make NFPA 1582 a minimum requirement to obtain a credential; the group modified their recommendation regarding the credential itself. In the end there are six implementation recommendations and two funding recommendations.

The purpose of this report is to catalog the nationally recognized qualifications for firefighters and officers to identify those individuals and organizations who may be summoned under the National Response Plan. This system defines the procedure by which a fire department can elect to participate in the national system and the process for selection of individuals to respond when needed. Not every firefighter or officer is going to meet these qualifications.

Chief Cota discussed the Certification and Standard Qualifications on page nine of the draft. When the NFPA updates, changes, or adds new standards, the most current update will apply. Due to the size of metropolitan fire departments (metros), their needs and the expense required to participate in State-level certification programs may be difficult to meet. The Credentialing organizations will work with these departments to establish policies to credential members for a period of 2 years from the inception of this program.

Mr. Gary Tokle motioned to accept the report and send the final draft to Mr. Paulison for review; Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Copies of the presentation and of the final draft are attached.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT: Mr. Doug Williams and Mr. Woody Stratton

Mr. Williams provided a handout on the National Fire Programs' Response Section course update/revision. It listed the courses that are being revised and updated, as well as courses that are being looked at to be compressed from 2-week to 1-week and 6-day to 5-day. The courses that may be compressed are still being studied and reviewed by each Training Specialist. Mr. Woody Stratton discussed the importance of keeping pertinent information when these courses are condensed. There may be a way to have blended learning, such as having students complete pre-course and post-course work online. There is also the option of making 2-week courses into 1-week courses that are split into separate times/weeks of the year. This may help to ensure that all valuable information or material remains in the courses when they are shortened. The Training Specialists are still reviewing alternatives. The Board asked about the criteria used in determining which courses could be reduced. That information was unavailable. Dr. Onieal added that shortening courses will promote better use of technology and better utilization of the campus—a better leveraging of resources. What about the weekends? A new trend has been States holding a joint weekend; experience has been very positive.

Dr. Fleming stated that the Board's charge is to look at the adequacy of NFA's academic programs and the adequacy of resources to accomplish the work, not to micromanage the organization. One suggestion may be to take a course offline if revisions can not be made.

BUDGET: Ms. Terry Gladhill

Copies of the draft FEMA Fiscal Year 2006 Proposed Spending Plan were distributed. Ms. Gladhill gave a brief overview of some of the projects listed in the Proposed Spending Plan. Overall, there is an increase of \$380,000 from FY 2005. There is a decrease in the printing budget, with the difference moved to the Blended Learning Initiative. The equipment line item of \$75,000 will be used for new technical equipment in J Building. A Board members asked if there is a budget for the EFOP Symposium—need to check with Dr. Lawrence.

Mr. Ron Face discussed the positives and negatives of the USFA "fenced" budget. The money is great to have all year; but, if the need should arise for an activity that is not implemented through the budget, then you fall victim to unfunded mandates. Mr. Face reported that there is talk of a 2 percent cut across the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) without regard to any previous action taken by Congress. This may be an effect from the hurricanes.

Dr. Fleming asked Ms. Gladhill for a report on the cost data for curriculum development and course delivery over the last 5 years so that the Board may look at any trends. Ms. Gladhill will pull those numbers and provide them to Dr. Fleming.

FACILITY: Mr. Ron Face

Per the discussion at the last meeting regarding deferred maintenance, all contracts have been rewarded, but some may not have been implemented yet due to the disasters. Progress is being made at Noble regarding the use of the facility. The main focus for the classes held at Noble will be within the medical field. The DHS inventory is still a work in progress. There were a lot more facilities and resources to be inventoried than originally speculated, so the inventory is a few months behind schedule.

Mr. Face described to the group recently implemented changes in security. Based on performance and value to the Government, the security contract was awarded to a different company. A number of posts were eliminated, but this will not interfere with access to the campus grounds. The gate usage was studied, and as a result, times for opening and closing the Provincial House and lower avenue gate were adjusted. The main gate will remain open at all times. There also will be more reliance on staff to lock and unlock doors when necessary

For the future, a new concept is being considered. It is a \$3.5 million project that involves smart cards (swipe system) being given to anyone with access to campus. There will be no considerations for this plan until DHS inventory is complete.

October 8

The meeting reconvened at 8:45 a.m.

ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Dr. Onieal and Dr. Kirby Kiefer reported on a number of activities:

- Class Cancellation - during the week of September 11-16, Volunteer Incentive Program classes were cancelled for a variety of reasons.
 - Student attendance was anticipated to be down.
 - A few instructors had been deployed.
 - There was a possibility the campus would be used for other purposes.

Students will be rescheduled in upcoming classes – they will not suffer.

- FireHire was established in response to Hurricane Katrina due to an urgent need for reliable Disaster Community Relations workers. The fire service was tapped on September 1; an official announcement went out on September 8. A Call Center was put into place and operated on a 24/7 basis. A total of 2215 teams were processed (718 volunteer, 1499 career). The outcome was successful with some “bumps” along the way. The Call Center was closed on September 29. Some staff migrated to Procurement to assist with document preparation. Calls and e-mail are being routed to Procurement.
- FireAid – USFA also established a call center for donations, beginning operations on September 24. Staffers Stan Steward, Brad Pabody, and Bill Troup from the National Fire Data Center were instrumental in standing this call center up and deserve high praise. The USFA database was merged with one for FireHouse.com. There turned out to be more donors than those who were in need. That center has also stopped operations, and calls are being forwarded to Mr. Ken Kuntz.
- Staff Deployments included:
 - Dr. Onieal to Atlanta (September 5-16)
 - Ed Kaplan to Atlanta (September 15-30)
 - Mr. Terry Glunt to Baton Rouge (beginning October 11)
 - Everybody else worked the 24-hour operation one or both of the Call Centers.
- Course Length Adjustment – the phase-in should begin in FY 2007. The complicating factor is if the technology will be there to support the coursework. The Degrees at a Distance (DDP) course conversion will most likely set the tone. Chief Cota asked about the possibility of weaving together 2-day direct deliveries with the 5-day deliveries, and suggested that the State Training Directors and the Training Resources and Data Exchange partner be consulted in identifying courses.
- Learning Management System Challenges – changes in technology are constant. With USFA moving to Preparedness October 1 and EMI staying with FEMA, USFA is exploring new alternatives with EMI.
- Blended Learning Initiative - \$100K has been set aside for this in the FY 2006 budget.
- American Council on Education (ACE):
 - NFA is working on a plan for proctoring distance learning courses that will comply with ACE concerns. Staff members are looking at the Penn State model.
 - ACE has a new transcript service that they will be using with the State training systems as the States get on board with ACE. NFA is considering using the transcript service as well so that its students have the opportunity to have all their education records in one place. This is still in a discussion phase; it would require some changes in information sharing permissions.

WORK SESSION

Dr. Fleming asked Dr. Onieal to identify some items that he'd like to see in the future:

- 1) Rightsizing courses.
- 2) Completion of the conversion of DDP courses.
- 3) Increase student numbers.
- 4) Increase minority enrollments.

There are continuing issues with instructor bid lists and no uniform process amongst curriculum areas. As far as instructor diversity, Dr. Onieal continues to encourage minorities to apply to teach; they may not make a lot of money, but will earn a national reputation.

The BOV members agreed that they should send to the Fire Administrator three separate letters on : 1) commending staff [deployment (here (call center) and there], 2) endorsing/recommending implementation of the Credentialing system, and 3) endorsing the move to reduce course length through the continued and increased use of alternative delivery method, thereby increasing availability and accessibility to students, while increasing student numbers.

After discussion, the NFA BOV members identified the following topics for the Annual Report. They are:

Programs

- 1) ACE process / States.
- 2) Higher Education initiatives / FESHE.
- 3) Alternative delivery methods / initiation of reducing course length
- 4) DDP course conversion to Web-based.
- 5) Credentialing.
- 6) Completion of handoff materials to the States – everything that can be handed off has been.
- 7) Increase diversity in instructors - NFA needs to be on the front-end for placing people on the instructor bid lists. There has been an increase in diversity of the students – would like to see that expanded.
- 8) Encourage restored funding of TRADE grants.
- 9) Effective use of Sim Lab.

Funding

- 1) Need additional money for curriculum development and maintenance.
- 2) NFA should have control of funding for curriculum development.
- 3) Need additional money for stipends.

Physical Plant

- 1) Bring technology up to speed to meet future plans for course delivery.
- 2) Deferred maintenance.

ADJOURNMENT

Chief Cota moved to adjourn; Ms. Johnson seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System

Concept and Recommendations

Presented to the National Fire Academy Board of Visitors

**Final Report
October 7, 2005**

This report describes the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS) as developed by a committee of representatives from each of the major fire service groups (Committee) and supported by the United States Fire Administration (USFA). It also provides recommendations for implementation and funding of the system.

The report has four parts.

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The Committee

Board of Visitors, National Fire Academy (BOV)

Dr. Sandy Bogucki, Associate Professor, Yale University School of Medicine, Section of Emergency
Medicine
New Haven, CT
Art Cota, Fire Chief, Shasta College Fire Department
Redding, CA

Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Program (FESHE)

L. Charles Smeby, Jr., Lecturer, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC)

Kirk Hale, Assistant Chief, Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue
Aloha, OR
Buddy Martinette, Fire Chief, Lynchburg Fire Department
Lynchburg, VA

International Association of Firefighters (IAFF)

Rich Duffy, Assistant to the General President
Washington, DC

International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAC)

Tim Bradley, Senior Deputy Fire Marshal, Office of the State Fire Marshal
Raleigh, NC

North American Fire Training Directors (NAFTD)

Timothy Dunkle, Administrator
Pennsylvania State Fire Academy, State Fire Commissioner's Office
Lewistown, PA
Randy Novak, Bureau Chief, Iowa Fire Service Training Bureau
Ames, IA

National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM)

Bill Barnard, State Fire Marshal, Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office
Pikesville, MD
Jim Burns, State Fire Marshal, Office of Fire Prevention and Control
Albany, NY

National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board)

V. Ken Elmore, Chief, Palm Beach FL (Ret.)
North Palm Beach, FL

National Fire Academy Alumni Association (NFAAA)

Ken Farmer, North Carolina Community College. (Ret.)
Fuquay Varina, NC
Al Mozingo, Captain, El Cajon, CA (Ret.)
Winchester, CA

National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)

Dennis Gorton, Fire Administrator, Pennington County Fire
Rapid City, SD
Woody Walters, Fire Service Specialist, Minnesota Fire/EMS Safety Center
St. Paul, MN

National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Wildland and Prescribed Fire Qualifications System

Rich Caballero, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Interagency Fire Center
Boise, ID
Rick Jensen, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Interagency Fire Center
Boise, ID

Prevention Advocacy Resources and Data Exchange (PARADE)

Mary Corso, Washington State Fire Marshal
Olympia, WA (Alternate: Charles Hall)
David Bowman, Assistant State Fire Marshal
Carson City, NV
Paul Gallahar, Fire Marshal, Tulsa Fire Department
Tulsa, OK

Training Resources and Data Exchange (TRADE)

Paul Berardi, Deputy Chief, Kansas City Fire Department
Kansas City, MO
Michael Clemens, Assistant Chief, Montgomery County Department of Fire & Rescue
Rockville, MD

Utah Certification Program

Steve Lutz, Director, Division of Training and Outreach, Utah Fire & Rescue Academy
Salt Lake City, UT

Part I: Background

The Need for the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System

The complexity of incident management, coupled with the growing need for multi-agency and multi-functional involvement in incidents, has increased the need for a total systems approach for response in emergency situations. In a federally declared incident, including terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies, the Federal government needs to be able to issue a call for authorized and qualified local, State, and Federal personnel to respond. At the incident scene, the Incident Commander (IC) and staff need to know that the individuals who respond are the ones who have been requested.

This report describes a system that:

- identifies the individuals who are requested in a federally declared incident, thereby restricting access to the disaster site to those who have been officially summoned; and
- confirms the identity and qualifications of the individuals who respond to a federally declared incident.

Some disasters are large enough that it is obvious from the very beginning that there will be a Federal declaration: a major earthquake, the outbreak of tornados in Oklahoma in 1999, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. However, the Committee recognizes that most federally declared incidents do not start that way.

A more typical scenario is that the incident begins locally. It might be a flood, a snowstorm, a viral outbreak, or an industrial fire. The local fire department may call for help from neighboring departments. As the incident grows, there is a regional and then a State response. The State may request aid from neighboring States. When this is no longer sufficient, the State requests Federal assistance.

The system designed by the Committee identifies local and State resources that could respond to a federally declared incident. The Committee believes that, although the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS) is designed for a response to a federally declared incident, credentialing will permit a rapid response under the National Response Plan (NRP). This system will be useful any time resources are needed from outside the immediate local area, as it will allow Incident Command staff to identify the individuals responding and their qualifications.

What Is Credentialing and What Is Certification?

Credentialing is the process where an appropriate organization confirms that an individual is competent to perform in a specified position. The acknowledgement of an individual's qualification is a card issued by the organization confirming that individual's qualifications. It is this credential that the Incident Command staff will use to verify the identity and qualifications of individuals responding to a federally declared incident.

Certification involves measuring an individual's competence through a testing or evaluation process.

As a rule, credentials are issued as a result of certification through testing or evaluation. However, as is described on page 13 of this document, during an initial 2-year, start-up period for the NFSRCS, credentials may be based on evidence or testimonials that an individual has achieved the specified performance level without official certification.

Part II: Overview of the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System

This overview briefly describes the five components of the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS) as well as the process for issuing credentials. The components are described in greater detail in Part III.

Components

These are the five essential components of the NFSRCS:

1. Eligible participants (who can receive credentials).
2. Certifications and standards qualifications (what certifications will be credentialed and to what standard).
3. The credentialing organization (who is empowered to issue credentials, and how they are reviewed/accredited).
4. The credential (what information it contains).
5. The recordkeeping system (what it contains and how it is maintained).

The Credentialing Process

The process for credentialing fire service responders is quite simple:

1. The local fire department determines if its members will participate.
2. An eligible individual applies for credentials.
3. The credentialing organization:
 - verifies the individual's qualifications;
 - creates a record of the individual and adds the record to their database;
 - uploads the individual's attributes and privileges to the management infrastructure; and
 - issues the credential.

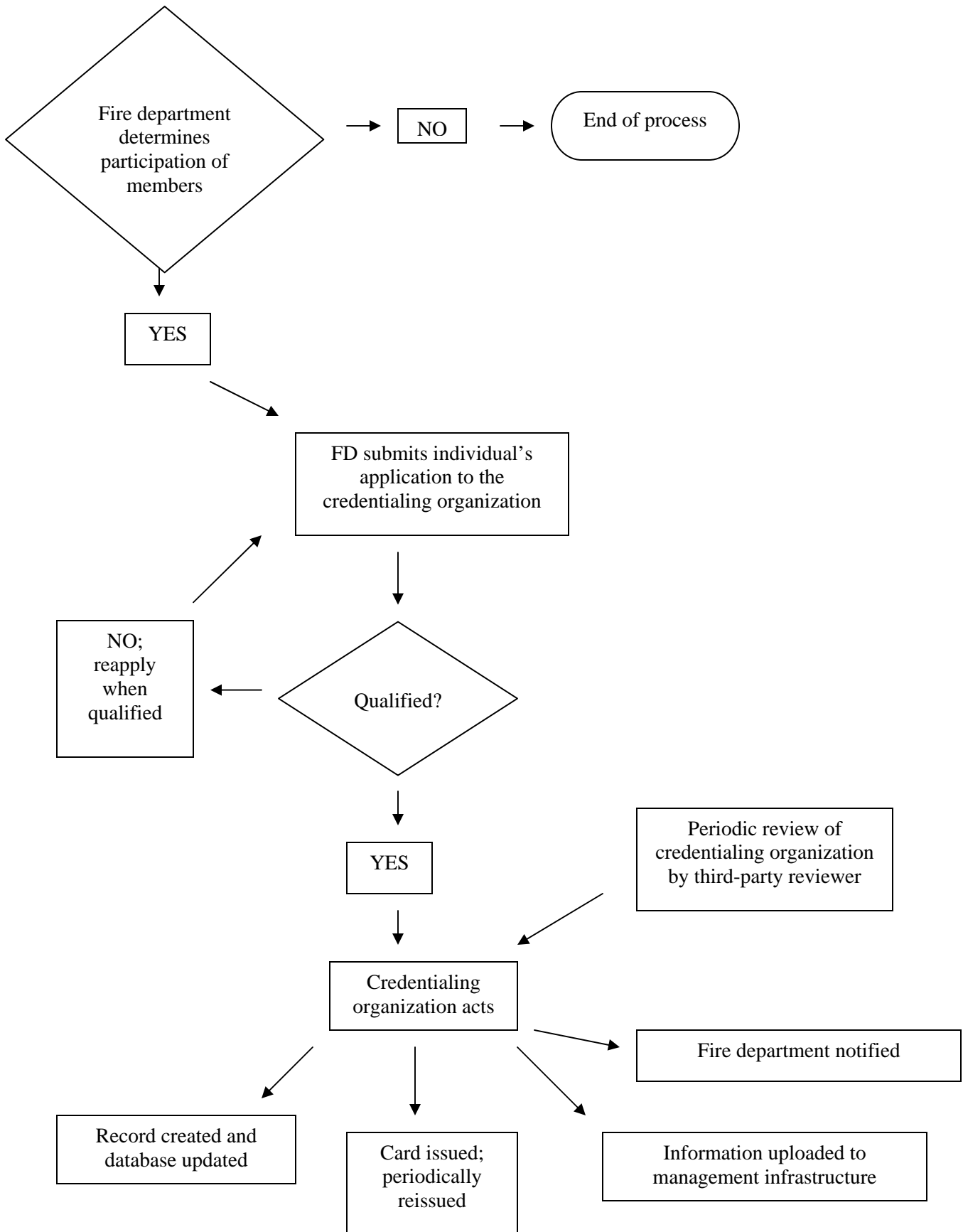
The flowchart on the following page shows this process.

Credentialing

Organization The term "credentialing organization" is used throughout this document to refer to the agency or organization within a State that is empowered to issue credentials. As a rule, the "credentialing organization" within a State will be the same agency or organization that has jurisdiction to certify firefighter qualifications.

Fire Department

A fire department is defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) as an organization providing rescue, fire suppression, and related activities. The term fire department shall include any public, governmental, private, industrial, or military organization engaging in this type of activity. (*NFPA 1001, 2002 Edition, Chapter 3, Definitions*)



Part III: Credentialing System Component Descriptions

This section describes in detail the five components of the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS):

1. Participant eligibility.
2. Certifications and standards qualifications.
3. Credentialing organization.
4. The credential itself.
5. The recordkeeping system.

For each of the components, a justification is provided for the decisions made.

Eligible Participants Criteria

Participation in the NFSRCS is based on two factors:

1. **Being chosen to participate:** Fire departments have the authority to determine if their members will participate in the NFSRCS system.
2. **Meeting eligibility criteria:** An individual fire service member is eligible to participate in the NFSRCS if he or she meets the following criteria:
 - an active member of a participating fire department as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA);
 - at least 18 years of age;
 - certified as meeting at least one of the competency standards listed in the next section (Certification and Standard Qualifications); and
 - medical and fitness status verified annually.

Eligibility Criteria Justification

For who will determine participation in the system:

In the fire service, the primary authority rests with the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ). Since this program affects availability of resources, personnel, and equipment, ultimately the decision about whether to participate must rest with the AHJ.

For the age restriction:

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) Fair Labor Standards Act prohibits minors under age 18 years old to work in any occupation or operations that it deems to be hazardous. A federally declared disaster response to a domestic terrorist attack, major disaster, or other emergency conforms to the DOL definition of hazardous work.

Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ)

The authority having jurisdiction may be a Federal, State, local, or other regional department; or an individual such as a fire chief, fire marshal, chief of fire prevention bureau, labor department; or a health department, building official, electrical inspector; or others having statutory authority. At government installations, the commanding officer or department official may be the authority having jurisdiction. (NFPA 1001, 2002 Edition, Chapter 3, Definitions)

For the minimum qualification:

The NFSRCS seeks to identify competent personnel to respond safely and effectively to federally declared incidents. Therefore the decision was made to limit the program to those fire service members who have received at least one certification at any qualification level as described in the next section. These certifications indicate a certain level of training and/or experience.

Certification and Standard Qualifications

Competency standards

In order to promote interoperability under the National Response Plan, the Committee identified 19 certified levels within the fire service that require knowledge, skills, and abilities for the safe and effective mitigation of a federally declared incident. These certified levels have an associated published national standard and/or curriculum required to obtain certification. When the NFPA updates, changes or adds new standards, the most current update will apply.

The certified levels and their applicable minimum standards are listed below. In some instances, the list includes those subcategories of a certified-level position that will be included in the NFSRCS.

1. Certification: Firefighter I, II
Standard: NFPA 1001, *Standard for Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*
2. Certification: Fire Officer I, II, III, IV
Standard: NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*
3. Certification: Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator
Standard: NFPA 1002, *Standard for Fire Apparatus Driver/Operator Professional Qualifications*

Driver/Operator--Pump;
Driver/Operator--Aerial Device;
Driver/Operator--Tiller;
Wildland Fire Apparatus;
Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Apparatus; and
Mobile Water Supply Apparatus.
4. Certification: Rescue Technician
Standard: NFPA 1006, *Standard for Rescue Technician Professional Qualifications*

Rope Rescue Technician;
Surface Water Rescue Technician;
Vehicle and Machine Rescue Technician;
Confined Space Rescue Technician;
Structural Collapse Rescue Technician;
Trench Rescue Technician;
Subterranean Rescue Technician;
Dive Rescue Technician; and
Wilderness Rescue Technician.

5. Certification: EMS/HM Level I, II
Standard: NFPA 473, *Competencies for EMS Personnel Responding to Hazardous Material Incidents*
6. Certification: Responders to HAZMAT Incidents
Standard: NFPA 472, *Professional Competence of Responders to Hazardous Material Incidents* or 29 CFR 1910.120 (Subpart q) [40 CFR 311 for non-OSHA States]

HAZMAT Awareness Level;
HAZMAT Operational Level;
HAZMAT Officer;
HAZMAT Safety Officer;
HAZMAT Technician;
HAZMAT Technician with a Cargo Tank Specialty;
HAZMAT Technician with a Tank Car Specialty;
HAZMAT Technician with an Intermodal Tank Specialty;
HAZMAT Incident Commander; and
HAZMAT Specialist Employees (A, B, C).

7. Certification: Wildland Firefighter
Standard: NFPA 1051, *Standard for Wildland Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*

- Wildland Fire Fighter I;
- Wildland Fire Fighter II;
- Wildland Fire Officer I;
- Wildland Fire Officer II;
- Wildland/Urban Interface Protection Specialist; and
- Wildland/Urban Interface Coordinator.

Or

National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) 310-1 or State equivalent

8. Certification: All other Wildland positions
Standard: NWCG 310-1 or State equivalent
9. Certification: Safety Officer
Standard: NFPA 1521, *Standard for Fire Department Safety Officer*

Health and Safety Officer;
Incident Safety Officer;
Incident Safety Officer, Fire Suppression;
Incident Safety Officer, Emergency Medical Service Operations;
Incident Safety Officer, Hazardous Materials Operations; and
Incident Safety Officer, Special Operations.

10. Certification: Airport Fire Fighter (ARFF)
Standard: NFPA 1003, *Standard for Airport Fire Fighter Professional Qualifications*

11. Certification: Fire Inspector and Plan Examiner
Standard: NFPA 1031, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Inspector and Plans Examiner*
- Fire Inspector I, II, III;
Plan Examiner I, II.
12. Certification: Fire Investigator
Standard: NFPA 1033, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Fire Investigator*
13. Certification: Fire Instructor I, II, III
Standard: NFPA 1041, *Standard for Fire Service Instructor Professional Qualifications*
14. Certification: Public Safety Telecommunicator I, II
Standard: NFPA 1061, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Safety Telecommunicator*
15. Certification: Public Information Officer and Public Fire and Life Safety Educator
Standard: NFPA 1035, *Standard for Professional Qualifications for Public Fire and Life Safety Educator* and/or NWCG 310-1
- Public Fire Life Safety Educator I, II, III;
Public Information Officer; and
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Specialist I, II.
16. Certification: Emergency Vehicle Technician I, II
Standard: NFPA 1071, *Standard for Emergency Vehicle Technician Professional Qualifications*
17. Certification: All-Hazard Incident Management Team (IMT) (5 levels)
Standard: NWCG 310-1, FIRESCOPE, current or pending NFPA standards or State equivalent
- Note: USFA and NFPA are working to develop a national curriculum and standards for eight All-Hazards IMT positions. As the positions become more defined, there will be a need to establish credentialing criteria for these positions. In the meantime, the alternative position standards should be used.
18. Certification: Marine Fire Fighter
Standard: NFPA 1405, *Guide for Land-Based Fire Fighters Who Respond to Marine Vessel Fires*
19. Certification: Industrial Fire Brigade
Standard: NFPA 1081, *Standard for Industrial Fire Brigade Member Professional Qualifications*
- Incipient Industrial Fire Brigade Member;
 - Advanced Exterior Industrial Fire Brigade Member;
 - Interior Structural Industrial Fire Brigade Member; and
 - Industrial Fire Brigade Leader.

Medical Qualifications

In order to ensure a safe response, the Committee identified one medical qualification standard, in addition to the medical qualifications inherent in each of the standards listed above. That standard is NFPA 1582, *Standard on Comprehensive Occupational Medical Program for Fire Departments*.

Using NFPA 1582, the authorizing agency must annually verify to the credentialing agency the medical and fitness status of the individuals who are currently credentialed.

Certification and Standards Qualifications Justification

A fundamental operating principle of the NFSRCS is that it will function within the existing State firefighter certification procedures rather than impose an additional bureaucratic structure on that process. The Committee made the decision to use the current certifications and standards.

The NFPA is an international nonprofit organization whose mission is to reduce the worldwide burden of fire and other hazards on the quality of life by providing and advocating scientifically based consensus codes and standards, research, training, and education. States and organizations across the country use these standards in the training and certification of their fire service personnel.

In some instances, the NFPA codes and standards are not the only standard being used. In those instances, other standards are referenced; for example, the National Wildfire Coordinating Group qualification standards for wildland fire positions.

Credentialing Organization

What organization can be a credentialing organization?

Responsibility for credentialing fire service personnel lies with the empowered organization within a State such as:

- the State Fire Training Delivery System;
- the State Fire Service Certifications System; or
- a separate certifying organization within a given State.

Evidence of empowerment must be indicated by one of the following ways:

- an organization provides evidence of a legal act, legislation, resolution or statute from the State or Federal government agency authorizing that organization to certify the professional competence of fire service personnel; **or**
- an organization provides significant evidence of support for its involvement as a certifying organization from within its constituency; **or**
- an organization provides evidence of the existence of a law broad enough in scope as to encompass certifying activities of the organization.

Examples of Empowerment

- General statute
- Letters of endorsement from constituent groups
- A rule adopted by the state-appointed fire/emergency services board or commission

In the absence of a single State organization, a local organization may be empowered through one of the options above.

Evidence of empowerment must be furnished prior to the approval of an organization acting as the credentialing organization for the NFSRCS.

Credentialing Guidelines

The empowered credentialing organization must verify that the individual meets the standards (see Certification and Standard Qualifications on pages 9 to 12).

Verification of competency standards:

The standards established for the credentialing system may be different from the standards the credentialing organization uses when it functions as the State's certifying agency. Credentials will be issued if the individual meets the standards defined in this document.

The credentialing organization will not issue a credential to any fire service member until that member has received his or her first eligible certification. For example, a fire service member must be certified to have met the requirements of NFPA 1001 before he or she can be credentialed as Fire Fighter I. At that time a credential will be issued showing that certification.

The credential will be valid for three to five years. After no more than five years, a new credential must be issued with updated information.

Verification of medical qualifications:

Verification is done through an application containing the signature of the AHJ.

Credentials and the corresponding databases and management infrastructure will be updated regularly to reflect an individual's most current certification and changes in medical and fitness qualifications.

Metro-size fire departments

The Committee recognizes that metropolitan fire departments (metros) may not be covered by the NFSRCS as described in this report. The metro fire departments are the 160 largest departments in the United States that train and possibly certify their own fire service members. Many metro fire departments function outside of a State certification system and their training may exceed State standards or NFPA certification standards. Due to the size of these departments, their complex training schedules, and the needs and the expense required to participate in State-level certification programs, the Committee proposes the following interim solution to allow these often highly qualified fire service members to become part of the NFSRCS.

Metropolitan Fire Department

By definition, a metro department is located in a city of 200,000 people or has 400 uniformed firefighters or is the largest city in the State without another qualifying city.

Credentialing organizations will work with local metro organizations to establish policies that allow these departments to present their personnel for credentials for a period of two years from the inception of this program. After two years, to continue to participate in the NFSRCS, a metro department must obtain its credentials through the State credentialing system. They will use the standards and processes adopted by that system or be delegated the responsibility of credentialing their firefighters by the certifying agency.

Third-party review/accreditation

Third-party review is the process of providing an independent review of a credentialing organization. In order for a State credentialing organization to add certifications to an individual's credentials, an objective third party must review the testing and certification process used by the State or empowered local jurisdiction. The review cannot be conducted by the same organization responsible for the testing and certifying.

This review may be provided by the International Fire Service Accreditation Congress (IFSAAC), the National Board on Fire Service Professional Qualifications (Pro Board), or any other similar organization chosen to be a third-party reviewer. Any third-party reviewing organization must meet the requirements of NFPA 1000, *Standard for Fire Service Professional Qualifications Accreditation and Certification Systems*, or equivalent.

Third-party reviewers may consist of members of the fire service, State or regional fire service professional organizations, such as State firefighters association, State fire chiefs association or others with an interest and understanding of fire service qualifications. It is recommended that the organization responsible for credentialing not have voting representation on this review panel.

This third-party review/accreditation should not be permanent. There should be an established term/time limit with periodic review to verify effectiveness. A five-year term is recommended.

The third-party review/accreditation process should consist, at a minimum, of the following:

- a self-analysis of the certification/credentialing program;
- a written report of the results of the self-analysis;
- a review of the report by the third-party reviewers;
- a site visit by the third-party reviewers to examine the organization's certification/credentialing system in relation to the criteria established for the credentialing program; and
- a final report to the organization by the third-party reviewers.

The third-party reviewers should review at a minimum the following components of the certification/credentialing organization:

- measurement of competencies, based on specific standards such as the NFPA Fire Service Professional Qualification Standards and other appropriate standards, of fire service members;
- review and security of all test mechanisms or other mechanisms used to evaluate fire service member competencies;
- adequacy of facilities and equipment necessary for verifying fire service competencies;
- qualifications established for the evaluators;
- maintenance of personnel records (based on privacy issues); and
- accessibility of the certification/credentialing process to all fire service personnel served by the organization.

Credentialing Organization Justification

In order for the NFSRCS to work, the credential must mean something. The agencies requesting additional resources, incident command staff, and fire service members on the front line, must trust that the individuals responding have the knowledge and skills to perform the job competently and safely. That can only be assured if the credentialing system is part of a larger process:

- the certification system measures knowledge and skills;
- the credentialing agency verifies the individual's qualifications; and
- the third-party review/accreditation validates the credentialing process.

National Fire Service Responder Credential

Eligibility for credentials

The National Fire Service Responder Credential is issued by the credentialing organization to eligible fire service personnel through their authorizing agency.

Credential characteristics

The credential will be structured and formatted to meet the FIPS Pub 201 criteria.

Issuing letter

The organization issuing the National Fire Service Responder Credential will provide a letter with the card defining when and how it is to be used and indicating that there are consequences for any misuse. All issuing organizations should use the same letter. This can be accomplished by providing a standard letter from DHS.

National Fire Service Responder Credential Justification

The credential is the visible evidence of an individual's qualifications. It should identify quickly and easily the holder (name, fire department, photo). It should be verifiable, with a unique identifier number, and capable of being read electronically. It should be easily recognizable.

Recordkeeping System

The credentialing organizations at the State level will maintain their own record-keeping systems and provide updates to the management infrastructure as mandated.

Data elements to be collected

The data elements collected will be consistent with FIPS Pub 201.

For competencies and medical and fitness qualifications, see pages 9-12. The credential must include the current position and attendant medical and fitness qualifications.

Recordkeeping System Justification

Because of the need to rapidly identify, deploy, and verify the qualifications of individuals at multiple incidents in real time, there must be a centralized infrastructure, consolidating information provided by credentialing agencies. Verification and updating of credentials will be done by the credentialing organization. Any change in the information on the credential will be uploaded to the management infrastructure as mandated. Incident Command staff at the scene will have the ability to verify a responding individual's identity and qualifications.

Part IV: Recommendations

Implementation of the National Fire Service Responder Credentialing System (NFSRCS) must not place an undue burden on State or local governments. The Committee makes the following recommendations for implementing and funding the NFSRCS.

Implementation Recommendations

1. **Recommendation:** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should establish and implement the NFSRCS, based on the guidelines developed by the Committee in this document. The credentialing system will identify qualified fire service personnel to respond to federally declared incidents. This includes terrorist attacks, major disasters, or other emergencies, as needed by the Federal government, to meet resource requests from States, Commonwealths, Territories, or the District of Columbia.
2. **Recommendation:** DHS will provide the database software, equipment, and staff resources to the credentialing organizations to support implementation of the credentialing system. This will include the ability to upload required information to a management infrastructure that receives information from qualification/certification agencies. This includes, but is not limited to the Incident Qualifications and Certification System (IQCS) (under development), Incident Qualification System (IQS), and the Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).
3. **Recommendation:** DHS will provide to credentialing organizations the necessary card printing hardware, software, supplies, and staff resources for production of the National Fire Service Responder Credential. The technology to accomplish this is commercially available.
4. **Recommendation:** DHS will establish within/under the NIMS Integration Center a Program Manager, with appropriate staff, for the NFSRCS. Duties would include the following:

coordinating, synchronizing and integrating with other first responder credentialing systems and with other related elements of the National Response Plan; and
periodically reconvening the Committee to evaluate the program and to recommend modifications (e.g., changes in NFPA standards) as needed. The membership of this committee may be expanded as needed to include representatives of typical credentialing organizations.
5. **Recommendation:** DHS shall investigate workers' compensation and medical coverage for fire service members dispatched to a federally declared disaster.
6. **Recommendation:** DHS should not tie participation in NFSRCS to eligibility requirements for funding. An example of such funding is the list found at http://www.fema.gov/pdf/nims/federal_prep_grant_prog.pdf. An issue of concern is that many departments do not participate in state-operated certification programs. Some allowance must be created to cover administrative costs for these departments that elect to participate in the NFSRCS.

FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

This national initiative is dependent upon the participation of State and local agencies. The NFSRCS must receive adequate Federal funding to establish, operate, and maintain the system.

1. Recommendation: DHS will develop a separate, ongoing, funding system (grant) to support the implementation and maintenance of the NFSRCS process in each State, Commonwealth, Territory, or the District of Columbia. The funding system shall provide pass-through, nonmatching funding to the legally empowered State fire service credentialing system to fund
 - personnel to establish, administer, and maintain the program;
 - equipment (hardware);
 - software;
 - software and hardware training; and
 - development and delivery of the certification and accreditation components of the NFSRCS to promote compatibility and interoperability within the National Response Plan.

In the absence of a State organization empowered to certify fire service members, DHS shall authorize an organization to credential fire service personnel. This organization shall receive the pass-through, nonmatching funds identified above.

2. Recommendation: DHS will provide funding to fire departments to participate in the credentialing system, including the cost of certification.