



United States Fire Administration/National Fire Academy

Executive Fire Officer Program

Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence in Fire/Emergency
Services Executive Education: 1985–2010



FEMA

The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP)

YEAR ONE

Executive Development (ED)

The first year course attempts to establish the reality that leadership is not about position, but is actually a behavior. There is great confusion globally regarding authority and leadership, and ED reinforces a framework for understanding the differences between technical (known solutions and practices) problems and the much more difficult adaptive ones (problems which require change of belief systems and behaviors). There is a significant module dealing with developing and conducting applied research, a cornerstone of the EFOP. Applied research is analogous to dealing with and then attempting to resolve primarily adaptive problems. Participants receive feedback from multi-rater assessment instruments so that self-awareness of perceived leadership effectiveness is offered and available.

YEAR TWO

Executive Analysis of Community Risk Reduction (EACRR)

The U. S. Fire Administration believes that a primary role of the senior fire executive is to exercise leadership through risk analysis and mitigation. EFOP students build a demographic and risk profile of their home community. They examine social, cultural, economic, and environmental trends that impact community risk. EACRR provides a process for the student to lead community risk-reduction efforts by developing a draft plan for a local risk-reduction initiative, and applying change management models. Organizational and community politics are assessed. The ultimate goal of the course is to develop fire service leaders who are committed in word and deed to comprehensive multi-hazard community risk reduction.

YEAR THREE

Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations in Emergency Management (EAFSOEM)

EAFSOEM prepares senior staff officers in the administrative functions necessary to effectively manage the operational component of a fire/rescue department. Some of the areas covered are risk assessment, incident documentation, media/political considerations, standards, legal mandates, capability assessment, damage assessment, emergency operations, Integrated Emergency Management System, Multi-Agency Coordination Systems including the Emergency Operations Center. Throughout the course, participants are presented with a series of senior-staff-level issues that require extensive analysis and action. The course is very intense and uses lecture, case study, simulation, scenario, and student participation as instructional media.

YEAR FOUR

Executive Leadership (EL)

The final year EFOP course provides an opportunity to extend the learning experienced in prior courses so that future opportunities to exercise leadership are moved to a practice. Participants are required to share actual contemporary cases which contain adaptive problems. Case studies offer further analysis and application opportunities. A personal plan is created and each participant receives feedback regarding their introspection and efforts to strategize post-EFOP experiences. As in ED, participants receive feedback from a similar battery of multi-rater assessment instruments. A one-day field trip is offered to the Gettysburg National Military Park where frameworks of leadership presented throughout the EFOP courses & research are discussed, further analyzed, and applied in light of this historic 1863 event.

Following each course, an Applied Research Project (ARP) must be completed. The ARP identifies a problem or issue that presently exists within the participant's organization and/or jurisdiction which has significance to the course just completed. ARPs are due within six months, and are evaluated by contract reviewers.

A minimum grade of 2.0 (based on a 4.0 academic scale) is required for each of the ten ARP sections. ARPs must be completed according to the USFA/NFA guidelines and the American Psychological Association (APA) style format. For examples of ARPs go to: http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/nfa/efop/applied_research/index.shtml



The Executive Fire Officer Program is an initiative of the USFA/NFA designed to provide senior officers with a broad perspective on various facets of fire and emergency services administration. The EFOP curriculum and research framework examines how senior authority figures can exercise leadership when dealing with difficult, adaptive problems within their jurisdictions.

EFOP participants enhance their professional development through a unique series of four resident graduate- and upper-level college-equivalent courses, and the completion of an Applied Research Project (ARP) for each course. The EFOP spans a 4-year period and consists of four “core” courses. Each course is 2 weeks in length.

A *Certificate of Completion* for the entire EFOP is awarded only after the successful completion of the final ARP.

History of the EFOP

EFOP began as a three year professional development program in 1985 expanding to its current length (of four years) in 1988. The post-course Applied Research Project (ARP) component was implemented in 1990 and many of these ARPs are now archived and available to the public through the National Emergency Training Center *Learning Resource Center*. Twenty-five years later USFA/NFA is nearing a threshold of 3000 EFOP alumni and a completion rate of ARPs in the thousands. Together, EFOP alumni and their research have resulted in significant changes to fire/emergency services organizations and their communities in the US and internationally. Academically, there are a number of higher education institutions that have created degree programs which recognize EFOP courses and research, some doing so at the graduate level. EFOP is recognized both within the Fire Emergency Services Higher Edu-

cation (FESHE) Model and within the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD) criteria.

Selection Criteria for the Executive Fire Officer Program

Admission to the EFOP is limited to the following individuals:

Service Requirement:

- Chiefs of department or equivalent.
- Chief-officers or equivalent who head major bureaus or divisions within a fire department/emergency medical services organization. Examples of functions include suppression, emergency medical, prevention, emergency management, training, etc.
- Battalion-level chief officers from “IAFC/NFPA metro-size” fire organizations also will be considered. (By current definition a metro fire department contains minimum staffing of 400 paid/career members.)
- *The Key Leading Program*: Other individuals who are serving in key positions whereby leadership has been exercised. (*The Key Leading Program* focuses on people who are not yet senior officers, but are serving in authority positions [such as a Company Officer] within their fire or emergency services organization and have the opportunity to exercise leadership.)

Note: Firefighters or firefighter/paramedics *will not* be considered eligible as candidates for the EFOP.

Academic Requirement:

Applicants must have attained a Bachelor’s Degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning. Verification must be submitted at the time of application. No exceptions will be made to this requirement.

How to Apply:

Note: Qualified applicants may submit an application package at any time

during the year. However, there is a cutoff date of June 15 for each fiscal year. Applications postmarked after June 15 will be held until the following June 15 for consideration. Application packages will be reviewed on an individual basis and require the following seven separate items.

1. A FEMA Form 75-5 General Admissions Application Form. In block #9a, please specify “Executive Fire Officer Program.”
2. A FEMA 95-22 Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) short essay response form. Both forms can be found at DHS/FEMA/U.S. Fire Administration/National Fire Academy Web site.
3. A letter from the applicant requesting admission to the EFOP. This letter should specify the applicant’s qualification (see eligibility section), commitment to complete the entire program, including the Applied Research Projects, and the applicant’s perceived expectation(s) of the program.
4. A resumé of the applicant.
5. A letter of recommendation from the applicant’s jurisdictional head (Mayor, City Manager, Chief of Department, etc.) including the organizational commitment to allow and support the applicant to complete the required courses and research.
6. A photocopy of the applicant’s academic diploma certificate.
7. An organizational chart that shows the applicant’s position.

The application package must be sent to:

National Emergency Training Center
16825 South Seton Avenue
Office of Admissions, Building I
Emmitsburg, MD 21727



Fire Chief Ray Michael Garcia,
Aurora, CO Fire Department

“The NFA’s EFOP experience was exceptional! The opportunity to network with exemplary fire officers throughout the country, along with the cutting edge curriculum prepared me for the challenges of being selected as Aurora’s new fire chief in 2007. More importantly, the EFOP provided the interpersonal skills and confidence to reinforce organizational servitude leadership; create a strong ‘no excuses’ commitment towards firefighter safety; and provide our community with exceptional customer service. I strongly recommend the EFOP, which is unique and second to no other program.”



Deputy Fire Chief Ruth Obadal,
Central Pierce Fire & Rescue
Department, Tacoma, WA

“I am asked sometimes if the benefit of EFOP is worth the time commitment. My answer is always ‘Yes, absolutely!’ The concepts I learned and continue to build on, the professional relationships I have developed, and the ongoing resources of this program have repaid that investment many times over.”



**Deputy Chief Officer
Steven Warrington,**
State Operations, County Fire
Authority Victoria Australia

“There is no doubt that the academic learning resulting from the applied research papers is a key EFOP outcome. However there were three other significant outcomes for me that were of equal value which benefited both our organization and my individual, personal development: The sharing and learning with people from different cultures; the extended network of like minded career officers to share ideas with; and a degree of personal confidence that I developed to constructively contribute on the international stage.”



Fire Chief Willie Patrick,
City of Wilmington, DE
Fire Department

“As a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program I have gained a broader perspective on the difficult task of leading in an ever changing environment. Information obtained through the instruction and networking with other fire service leaders has allowed me to be better prepared in addressing complex problems and managing these changes effectively.”



Battalion Chief Spencer Kimura,
Village of Glenview, IL
Fire Department

“Participating in the EFOP provided an opportunity to view issues in the fire service far beyond my prior educational endeavors. During my EFOP experience, I had the opportunity to exchange ideas and obtain different sets of values that stretched beyond the confines of the United States—a perspective I had not anticipated. No other institution can offer such an exceptional curriculum that brings fire service leaders together to learn, discuss, problem solve, and ultimately, make a difference in their own community.”



**Executive Administrator
Drusilla Martin,**
City of Nashville, TN
Fire Department

“My experience in the EFO Program was the best learning experience that I have had in my fire service career. Since my job is financial management, I learned things in areas previously not explored. Not having engaged in research since college (over 30 years ago), I was somewhat nervous about writing papers. However, the instructions given were clear and concise. I now have three published papers in the NFA’s Learning Resource Center and my writing confidence has increased to the extent that I am now in the beginning stages of writing a book.”



**Fire Chief and Emergency
Management Director
Mark A. Carr,**
City of New Britain, CT
Fire Department

“The EFOP Program provides a unique opportunity to interact with fire service personnel and other professionals from around the world. This program stimulates your intellect and imparts knowledge to help meet the actual and anticipated challenges of today’s fire service.”



Fire Chief Lori Sunderman,
City of Stuart, FL
Fire Department

“The Executive Fire Officer Program experience is one that supersedes all others. Although the research projects are timely and involved, the benefits they brought the department and the fire service are invaluable. The requirements of the program increased my writing and research abilities, which in turn improved my knowledge and communication skills. Networking with numerous other officers has allowed me to develop confidants and allies from all over the

country. This network of relationships has guided and assisted me; they continue to play a role in working through many tough decisions confronted on the job every day.”



Fire Chief Steve Cover,
City of Virginia Beach, VA
Fire Department

“The Executive Fire Officer Program experience has been one of the most rewarding of my fire service career. I feel the program assisted me on several levels. Personally, the development and growth opportunity assisted me in moving through the Fire Department ranks. In researching fire service issues, I was able to propose best practices for our department, adopting and building upon the body of research for our future fire service. Finally, the life-long friendships and networking opportunities developed through the program will continue to provide value to me personally and to the fire service as a whole.”



Fire Chief R. B. Alley,
City of College Station, TX
Fire Department

“The Executive Fire Officer Program is the foundation and platform for building ‘great’ fire service leaders for the future. I experienced an outstanding series of instructors and courses that helped prepare me to meet the demands of a chief fire officer in the 21st century, both professionally and personally. This educational experience changed my thought process, and enabled me to develop skills and acquire knowledge in preparation for the challenges of leading in today’s fire service.”



Assistant Chief Richard Tobin,
Fire Department of New York, NY

“The EFOP was a defining moment in my career with the FDNY. The curriculum provided me with a toolbox of skills that I have continuously drawn upon since my acceptance into the program as a Captain through my present rank, Assistant Chief of Department within the FDNY. I highly recommend the EFOP to any fire officer wishing to expand his or her horizon.”

