



R0506

Dear National Fire Academy Student:

Congratulations on your acceptance into the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), National Fire Academy (NFA) “Executive Planning” (EP) course. This course is designed to meet the needs of fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) chiefs and senior leadership. It promotes planning for systematic organizational performance in the learning organization.

During the course, you will explore modules that include leadership, strategic planning, and project management. These modules will prepare you to make decisions regarding your department’s future, project team selection, guides to successful implementation, and project evaluation. To explore these issues, you will go beyond analysis and design to involve important dimensions of facilitation, teamwork and the modeling of an organization’s commitment to problem solving.

In order for the course to be meaningful, you need to do the following 7 things before coming to Emmitsburg, Maryland.

1. Obtain a copy of the text *Applied Strategic Planning: An Introduction* (ISBN-0787988529), T. Noland, L. Goodstein, J. Goodstein, J.W. Pfeiffer; 2nd edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc.
 - a. Read Chapters 1-3. (The remaining chapters will be covered in class.)
 - b. With Chapter 2, consider the learning perspective that you will be serving as an internal consultant to your organization/community strategic planning process.
2. Read the following book: *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable* (ISBN-0787960756), P. Lencioni, Jossey-Bass; A. Wiley Co.
3. Survey your community for sites that depict a successful strategic effort and outcome and one that is a current challenge or opportunity. Pick one of each and obtain pictures of those selected sites.
4. Using the selected sites as points of reference for dialogue, meet with your local community manager or policy director and dialogue on the following questions.
 - a. In regard to the positive site, what was the strategic process used to obtain a positive outcome?
 - b. What specific changes in vision and values in the community were needed to create and sustain momentum in achieving the strategic goal?
 - c. In regard to the challenged site, what are the influences impacting the desire and ability to change the area?
 - d) What is the difference in the community vision and values regarding the challenged site as compared to that which was present with the positive site?
5. After completing items 3 and 4, prepare a written narrative, including copies of the photographs, that summarizes your meeting dialogue and answers the questions listed in item 4. Include in your narrative the name and title of the person you met with. Bring to the first day of class 5 copies of your narrative.

6. Complete the MS Project® Tutorial. To access the tutorial, please click on the following link, <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/ax/staff/heilig/r0506/>, or copy and paste the link into your browser's address window.
7. Review the Winchester Virginia Downtown Strategic Plan that may be accessed by following <http://www.winchesterva.gov/government/strategic-plan> or copy and paste the link into your browser's address window. This information will be used in a class activity on the first day.

The first day of class will begin on Monday at approximately 8 a.m. Subsequent classes will meet daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with graduation occurring on the second Thursday evening at 4 p.m. in the classroom. Evening classes may be required.

The NFA classroom environment is computer based. You are responsible for the security and maintenance of your electronic equipment. The NFA cannot provide computer software, hardware (which includes disks, printers, scanners, monitors, etc.), or technical support for your device. For your convenience, we do provide surge protector power strips at each classroom table.

Should you need to access the Student Computer Lab, it is located in Building D and is available for all students to use. The lab is open daily with a technician available Monday through Thursday from 1700 to 2100 (5 p.m. to 9 p.m.) and on Saturdays from 0800 to 1200 (8 a.m. to noon). The lab uses Windows 7 and Office 2013 as the software standard.

If you need additional information related to your course's content or requirements, please contact Dave Donohue, Training Program Management and Planning, and Information Management Training Specialist, at (301) 447-1094, or by email at david.donohue@fema.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,



Eriks J. Gabliks, Superintendent
National Fire Academy
U.S. Fire Administration