

Los Angeles Area Regional Training Group

Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association

JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT LOS ANGELES AREA REGIONAL TRAINING GROUP JPA Information/Q&A

Background:

By establishing the Regional Training Group (RTG) JPA, we are on the cusp of developing the next major cooperative nationally recognized Fire Service program. Fire agencies in the Los Angeles County Operational Area have worked together for years to prepare for natural, technological, and human-caused disasters. California led the way in the 1940's with the development of the statewide mutual aid system; Southern California fire agencies, through FIREScope in the 1970's, developed the Incident Command System to strengthen the command and coordination of the mutual aid system. Both of these regional fire service systems are now in use nationwide.

Today the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs Association (LAAFCFA) has set a vision for the RTG to create and operate a nationally recognized regional training and education program. As part of a larger initiative to develop regional training for a progressive fire service environment, the RTG has successfully proven that regional training through multi-agency integration is a force multiplier that ramps up resource leverage, and actually increases the capacity of first responders and specialty teams to handle the most critical work which terrorism or disasters present. Through regionalized training, any and all emergencies are handled more seamlessly thus increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. When a disaster strikes the LA region, no one department will be able to handle all calls for assistance in a widespread emergency response. Through cooperation, the 30 fire agencies in the LA region have built relationships by promoting trust with the goal of achieving interoperability between all partner agencies.

Combined with the dangers that exist in urban/metropolitan framework is the fact that fire department leaders are being asked to do more with less. This requires training officers to look for new ways to continually deliver critical training information to their audiences. Fire department training remains the best insurance policy that any agency can provide to ensure the safety and operational effectiveness of its members and to the public it serves. That belief mandates that the region's fire departments work in a cooperative manner within the urban area Homeland Security Strategic Plan to effectively and efficiently develop and deliver standardized training to all of its firefighters. The RTG Strategic Plan identifies ways to better prepare for human-caused and natural disasters and was developed under the direction of the LAAFCFA by the RTG. The next step in this evolution of cooperation is the establishment of a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).

Discussion:

LAAFCA is seeking support from all 30 fire departments within the Los Angeles Area to create the RTG Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). By doing so, the Los Angeles Area Fire Chiefs will develop a governance structure that ensures an equitable and sustainable level of cost-effective standardized all-risk training (inclusive of all in-service related training that is not supported by homeland security grants).

This LA regional based program has the potential to provide Fire Service Training Standards across the nation as the aforementioned Mutual Aid and FIREScope systems did years ago, while creating national significance. In our current structure, we have already provided a framework for training fire department personnel to meet the full range of potential terrorism caused disasters in the region. The current training platform is Homeland Security Grant funded and is an undertaking that mandates establishing centralized regional training priorities with a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) nexus. By creating a JPA, the fire chiefs are able to provide all areas of Regional Fire Service training while not limiting to the restrictions of CBRNE related training that Homeland Security Grants impose (think advancements in fire suppression operations, emergency medical services [EMS], leadership development and similar training that can be delivered to your local firefighters).

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, first responders nationwide had to identify new ways to prepare for the unthinkable. New curriculum, tools, equipment and methods for safe firefighting and rescue operations continue to evolve. Incident command elements have had to be further developed to operate effectively within the unified command, multi-agency, mutual aid environment. Although departments like Los Angeles Fire Department and Los Angeles County Fire Department possess unmatched resources, every department in the LA region has something to offer through a cooperative and collaborative manner which will make all of the 9000 professional firefighters within the Los Angeles region better by training as one. It is the ongoing goal of the RTG to design, coordinate and deliver cost-effective fire service training equitably to all the participating agencies. The RTG training programs utilize trained instructors from across the region to deliver the necessary learning at shared regional facilities of all types, through online training and via multi-media communications to fire stations.

Outcomes & Responsibilities:

The strategy of the RTG JPA may require a fundamental change of thinking by the participating agencies; switching from individual stand-alone Non-CBRNE training to a regionally supported and administered training program beneficial to the end goal of training as one. The establishment of this JPA, in concert with the administration of a robust regional training program, will help bring about a culture that accepts local control and self-directed learning for independent fire departments while acknowledging and promoting the value of standardization and regional training; *the greatest good for the greatest number of first responders!*

1. What are the responsibilities of each member agency that joins the JPA?

- Member agencies provide administrative control & oversight through a legal framework
- Member agencies agree to meet on a routine basis in compliance with the Brown Act
- Member agencies agree to create an executive committee, as needed
- It is anticipated that member agencies will be asked to conduct the following:
 - Create Bylaws and/or other guidelines
 - Develop Overall Policy & Strategies for regional training
 - Develop a comprehensive plan for equitable funding
 - Develop a budget
 - Create committees and sub-committees, as needed
 - Other related responsibilities as set forth by the JPA Board

2. What specific capabilities will member agencies obtain from participating in this JPA?

- Non-CBRNE related In-Service Training
- Agency specific, targeted training
- Research opportunities & funding (such as the WiFIRE Project related to wildfire analysis)
- Use of RTG Training, which in turn should offset or augment annual training budgets for participating agencies
- Confidence that mutual aid and automatic aid agencies from the LA Region responding into the jurisdiction of the incident are trained to function at a competent and professional level of performance
- Membership in a nationally recognized fire service training program which is intended to partner with Community Colleges and University undergraduate and graduate level educational programs

Outcomes & Responsibilities (Cont'd):

3. What would be the monetary costs for RTG JPA membership?

It is important to note that LAAFCA is not asking any agency at this time to provide any funding to join the JPA. The JPA Board will be tasked with creating an equitable funding plan for each member agency.

Methodologies used to determine annual monetary contributions would be the responsibility of the Board. The points listed below are examples of monetary costs formulas and/or revenue generating plans that the JPA Board may consider:

Annual contributions that are to be determined by the JPA Board could include:

- Scalable set fee per agency (0-50 employees; 51-200 employees; etc.)
- A per capita cost with a formula agreeable to all participating agencies
- In-kind services to the JPA to offset cost of membership
- ISA agreements with Educational Partners which produce FTE Revenue generation for the JPA
- Securing Grants (Non-related Homeland Security Grants not requiring a CBRNE training nexus)
- Other recommendations by finance officials and approved by the signatory agencies (RTG JPA Board Members)

The RTG is exploring possibilities to be presented to the JPA Board for revenue generation once the JPA is established. The following programs are examples of revenue generating possibilities for the JPA:

- Granting access of RTG developed training to Fire Departments outside of the LA region for a fee. Hence, developing Industry training standards while generating revenue for the JPA. There are departments outside of the region already requesting access to RTG training.
- Selling advertising space on the newly developed RTG Mobile App
- Donations from private donors, private entities or higher learning centers/universities.
- Public/private partnerships related to studies, research, training or other activities that support regional training

The best way to predict the future is to create it!